The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF C. S. LEWIS

C.S. Lewis was born and raised and Ireland and educated in England. His mother died when he was young, and he spend his childhood immersed in literature and mythology. Lewis attended the prestigious Oxford University; he left for a time to fight in World War I, but after he was wounded in 1918, returned from the war and resumed his studies. The horrors he had seen in battle, however, caused him to turn away from Christianity and declare himself an atheist. As he lived, studied, and wrote, in Oxford, however, he struck up a friendship with J.R.R. Tolkien—the author of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*—and through their conversations and debates reluctantly found his belief in the Christian faith reinvigorated. Lewis went on to write works of fiction and nonfiction that celebrated Christianity and explored its depths; his seven *Narnia* books, his most famous works, became famous for their merging of biblical themes and fantastical worlds. Since the series' completion in the mid-1950s, they books have been adapted for television, film, and theater the world over.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The harrowing London air-raids—also known as the Blitz—provide the novel with its inciting incident and form the frame story around the children's adventures in Narnia. From 1940 to 1941, the Germans bombed Britain in mass air attacks, which left in their wake an extensive amount of destruction, both physical and psychological. The air-raids demolished homes, businesses, and important sites, but also demoralized British citizens tremendously and threw the country's class conflicts into greater relief. The wealthy and privileged fled the air-raids over the city for the less populous countryside, while the poor and downtrodden were forced to choose between remaining in their homes or traveling, dangerously and inconveniently, to public shelters. Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy's economic and social standing are never explored—but by virtue of their ability to travel to the countryside to enter the care of a clearly wealthy and landed ward, the Professor, it can be inferred that they come from a family of means with the ability to shelter them from the horrors of war.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe was one of the first fantasy novels to explore overtly themes of religion and warfare—particularly Christianity—but it was certainly not the last. J.R.R. Tolkien, a close friend and literary peer of Lewis's, wrote *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, which acted as sequels to his 1939 high-fantasy novel *The Hobbit*, around the same time Lewis was composing *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*. The two were part of an Oxford writing collective, and their long discussions about the craft of writing and the place of religious allegory in literature no doubt had an effect on both men's work. *The Lord of the Rings* books also feature Christ-like resurrections (in the form of Gandalf the Grey's return to life after death as the wiser, holier Gandalf the White) and struggles against temptation (many characters attempt to resist, or fail to resist, the allure of the magical One Ring), and their first installment was published just a few years after Lewis's first *Narnia* book. J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* novels, published between 1997 and 2007, draw heavily on the Narnia books—the England of Rowling's imagination exists parallel to a Wizarding World which has recently been torn asunder by a great war, and which was miraculously saved by a holy infant. Moreover, the *Harry Potter* series—like the *Narnia* series—consists of seven books. These explorations of the intersection between the realms of fantasy and religion would surely not exist without Lewis's influence.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*
- **When Written:** 1940s
- **Where Written:** Oxford, England
- **When Published:** 1950
- **Literary Period:** Postwar
- **Genre:** Fiction, children's literature, fantasy
- **Setting:** The English countryside and the land of Narnia
- **Climax:** Aslan the lion, having sacrificed himself to the White Witch in order to save the traitorous Edmund from being killed, is resurrected shortly after his death.
- **Antagonist:** The White Witch
- **Point of View:** Third person

EXTRA CREDIT

Gimme Shelter. Lewis lived in Oxford and worked as a professor there during the World War II. During the Blitz, Lewis himself sheltered three schoolgirls who sought refuge from the city in the countryside. The girls arrived in early September of 1939, and by late September, Lewis had begun work on the manuscript that would become *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*.

Chronology of the Chronicles. Though *The Lion, The Witch and*

the Wardrobe was the first published work in the *Chronicles of Narnia*, after the publication of all the installments, the books were organized and sold chronologically—*The Magician's Nephew*, a prequel that explains the Professor's backstory and his own adventures in the land of Narnia, is now presented as the first in the series.

PLOT SUMMARY

Siblings Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy have been sent away from London during the air-raids at the height of World War II. They arrive at the countryside house of a kind but eccentric Professor, and as the children explore the house, Lucy winds up in a room which is empty except for a large wardrobe. She opens it to see what's inside, and, after finding a row of fur coats, climbs up into it to rub her face into the furs. The wardrobe goes back farther than she thought, and as she climbs deeper and deeper into it, she soon finds herself walking on freshly fallen snow; when she looks up, she is deep in a snowy wood, and in front of her there is an old lamp-post.

She soon comes upon a Faun wearing a scarf, carrying an umbrella, and holding packages in his arms. The Faun, whose name is Mr. Tumnus, is so excited to see Lucy that he drops all of his parcels. As he picks them up, he asks her if she is a "Daughter of Eve," or a human. Lucy says that she is, and Mr. Tumnus tells her that she is in a land called Narnia where humans have rarely been seen. Mr. Tumnus invites Lucy to come back to his cave to get warm and have some tea; Lucy accepts. After a luxurious meal, Mr. Tumnus entertains Lucy with tales of Narnia's history, but, realizing that it must be growing late, Lucy decides to head home. Mr. Tumnus attempts to stop her from leaving, and when Lucy asks why he doesn't want her to go, Mr. Tumnus breaks down in tears. He confesses that he is in the unwitting service of the despotic White Witch, the pretender to the throne of Narnia—she has charged him to bring to her any human he encounters. Mr. Tumnus reveals that the White Witch has installed herself as Queen of the realm and made it so that it is "always winter and never Christmas" in Narnia. Lucy begs Mr. Tumnus not to turn her over to the Witch. Mr. Tumnus, who is kind and good, says he could never turn Lucy in, though he is afraid of what the Witch will do to him if she finds out he has gone against her—she has a habit of turning dissenters to stone. Mr. Tumnus brings Lucy back to the lamp-post and bids her goodbye. She walks back through the wood until she finds herself in the wardrobe again.

Lucy finds her siblings in the hall—she assures them she is all right though she has been gone for some time. Her siblings are confused, though, and insist that Lucy just went into the wardrobe room a moment ago. Lucy tells them about the enchanted world she found inside the wardrobe and beckons her siblings to come with her and see it for themselves. When she opens the wardrobe again, though, it is just an ordinary wardrobe, and her siblings tease her terribly.

On the next rainy afternoon, during a game of hide-and-seek, Lucy and Edmund both hide in the wardrobe. Edmund follows Lucy through the back of the wardrobe to Narnia, where he is amazed but disoriented. Soon, a large sleigh bearing an elegant woman in a crown stops in front of him. The woman asks Edmund "what" he is; as he stammers, she chastises him for not speaking more eloquently to the Queen of Narnia. Realizing that Edmund is human, the Queen plies him with enchanted Turkish Delight while she gets him to reveal information about himself and his siblings. The Queen is very interested in the fact that Edmund has three siblings, and urges him to bring them to her castle. If he does, she says, she will give him more candy—and make him Prince. The Queen departs, and Edmund hears Lucy calling for him. She has been at tea with Mr. Tumnus, and expresses her relief that Tumnus has remained unbothered by the White Witch. Lucy explains who the White Witch is, and Edmund realizes that he has just been conversing with her—though he does not reveal this to Lucy.

Back in the "real" world, Lucy is excited to have Edmund to back up her story of visiting Narnia, but Edmund lies to their older siblings and says that Lucy is making everything up. Lucy is upset for several days, and Peter and Susan grow concerned. They approach the Professor with their worries that Lucy has gone mad, but the Professor concedes that his house is a very old, large, and strange one, which no doubt hosts many mysteries beyond explanation. He encourages them to believe Lucy, who is, by Peter and Susan's own admission, far more truthful than Edmund. Peter and Susan try to make things easier for Lucy, and urge Edmund to stop teasing her.

One afternoon, hoping to hide from the Professor's grating and imposing housekeeper Mrs. Macready, all four children run through the house and hide in the wardrobe. After several minutes of hiding inside, the children feel a cold wind. They all stand up and head to the back of the wardrobe, where they finally all glimpse Narnia together.

Lucy brings the group to Mr. Tumnus's house to pay him a visit, but when they arrive they find that his cave has been ransacked; a note on the door signed by Maugrim, Captain of the Queen's Secret Police, states that he has been placed under arrest for high treason. Susan and Peter suggest they return home to safety, but Lucy says she can't possibly leave her friend in the Witch's clutches. Lucy spots a robin on a tree branch, and as it begins to hop from tree to tree, Lucy realizes that it is leading them somewhere.

Before long, they spot a Beaver, who urges them to follow him to a place where they can talk freely. In a clearing, the Beaver tells the children that Aslan is on the move, and help is on the way. Though the children do not know who Aslan is, they all feel deeply moved at the sound of his name. The children ask the Beaver for more details, but he insists that even the trees could be in the Witch's service and invites them to follow him home

for dinner where they can all talk safely. Once there, all four children eat a hearty meal. After dinner, the conversation turns to what can be done to help Mr. Tumnus, but Mr. Beaver insists that the best thing to do is to wait for Aslan to arrive and fix things. He explains that Aslan is the true King of Narnia; He is very powerful, but often absent from the realm, off taking care of other business. Mr. Beaver promises to take the children to meet with Aslan at the Stone Table the following morning. Mr. Beaver cites a prophecy which foretells four individuals of "Adam's flesh and Adam's bone" arriving in Narnia to end the Queen's reign and sit on the four thrones in the castle of Cair Paravel. The children have been so enraptured in their conversation that they haven't noticed that Edmund has gone. They search frantically, but soon realize that he has left the Beavers' dam entirely. Mr. Beaver says he could see from one look at Edmund that he had been touched by the Queen's magic and was not to be trusted; he predicts that Edmund has gone to the house of the Queen to warn her of Aslan's return.

Edmund, meanwhile, treks through the brutal cold to the Witch's house. There, he finds a veritable menagerie of stone animals scattered throughout the courtyard and the castle itself. Maugrim, the Queen's Secret Chief of Police—who is a talking wolf—brings Edmund to the Queen, who is incensed that he has come alone without siblings. Edmund warns the Queen that Aslan is coming, and she calls for her driver to ready her sleigh. Edmund, the Witch, and her driver the dwarf set out for the Stone Table. As they travel there, the air warms, and the snow turns to slush. The Witch realizes that her power is waning, and that it is due to Aslan's approach. The three continue to the Table on foot.

Meanwhile, the Beavers, Peter, Lucy, and Susan arrive at the Stone Table to find that a battle encampment has already been set up. Aslan is there, and though the children are intimidated by his imposing presence, Mr. Beaver urges the children forward. The children introduce themselves to Aslan, and he asks where their fourth sibling is; when they reveal that Edmund has turned traitor and ask whether there's any way of saving him, Aslan admits that rescuing Edmund may be harder than they think. Suddenly, the Queen's Police swarms the camp; Peter attacks and kills Maugrim, saving Susan from his clutches, and Aslan then knights Peter, commending him for his bravery. A rescue party manages to free Edmund from the Witch's clutches, but the Witch transfigures herself and her driver into boulders, evading capture. The next day, the Queen comes into camp and demands an audience with Aslan. Narnia's old laws and Deep Magic state that she is the executioner of traitors, so Edmund's blood is hers. Aslan talks with the Witch alone, and after their conversation, the Witch renounces her claim on Edmund and leaves camp—but it seems that Aslan has made some kind of dark promise to the Witch.

That night, after moving camp further east, there is a banquet, but Aslan is withdrawn and forlorn. Later, unable to sleep, Susan and Lucy get out of bed to check on Aslan. They find him wandering through the wood back to the Stone Table. Aslan notices the girls following him, and allows them to accompany him, but tells them that when he orders them to stop and turn back, they must do so. At the Stone Table, Aslan thanks the girls for their company, and then tells them he must go forward alone. Lucy and Susan hide and watch as the mighty lion approaches the Stone Table, where the Witch and her minions are waiting. They beat Aslan, shave his mane, spit upon him, taunt him, and tie him with ropes. The Witch gloats about beating Aslan, and then uses a knife to kill him.

After the execution, the Witch and her triumphant followers leave to track down the "human vermin." Susan and Lucy approach the Stone Table and weep over Aslan's corpse; they release him from his binds and then decide to take a walk to clear their heads. As they wander around the clearing, they hear a giant crack; the Stone Table has split, and Aslan has been resurrected. Aslan invites the girls to jump on his back and carries them all the way to the Witch's castle, where he begins to revive her stone statues and restore them to life. After gathering up an army of animals, nymphs, dryads, fauns, and giants, Aslan leads the group back to camp. There, they clash with the Witch and her army, and soon defeat her. After the battle, Aslan magically procures food for all loyal to him, and the following day, everyone marches to Cair Paravel, where Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy are crowned Kings and Queens of Narnia.

The siblings govern Narnia for many years. They forget their lives back in the "real" world, and spend their new lives ridding Narnia of evil and building bridges with neighboring lands. One afternoon, the four rulers arrive at the lamp-post; it looks familiar to them, but they do not remember why. They press on through the wood, and soon find themselves tumbling out of the wardrobe—not a moment has passed since they left. The children find the Professor and begin to tell the tale of Narnia. They are surprised to find that not only does the Professor believe their every word, but seems to know certain things about Narnia himself. He warns them to keep the secret of Narnia—unless they encounter someone else who mentions having visited there first.

CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Lucy – Lucy, who is Peter, Susan, and Edmund's youngest sister, is in many ways the primary protagonist of the novel. She is the first of her siblings to happen upon the world of Narnia, and is arguably the most deeply invested in returning the magical realm to peace and prosperity. Lucy is deeply kind, inquisitive, and open; as the youngest of all her siblings, she is the most naïve but also the most in touch with wonder, magic, and the

ability to believe in goodness, righteousness, and fantastical things. She is a loyal friend to Mr. Tumnus, the first creature she met in Narnia, and even convinces her siblings to remain to put themselves in danger to help him. She and Lucy also have a special, tender relationship with Aslan, as they are the ones who witness his death, which echoes Jesus Christ's Crucifixion. By the end of her long reign of Narnia, Lucy is renowned for her valiance and fairness.

Edmund – Edmund is Lucy's older brother and Susan and Peter's younger brother. He is a "spiteful" and cruel child who is easily duped by the White Witch and conscripted into her service on his first visit to Narnia. He is depicted as selfish and greedy—when the Witch serves him enchanted Turkish Delights in an attempt to bribe him into doing her bidding, he falls for her plot entirely, and is so determined to get his hands on more candy (and a Kingship) that he sells his siblings out to the Witch despite fully knowing that she is evil. Edmund, despite his traitorous ways, is a complex character who is often conflicted; he knows that many of his actions are wrong, deep down, but is usually too selfish to do the right thing. Aslan, the rightful King of Narnia, selflessly sacrifices himself to the White Witch in Edmund's place, redeeming Edmund of his selfish and traitorous ways. By the end of the novel, Edmund returns from Narnia a much more thoughtful and just person, known for his clearheaded judgement.

Susan – The oldest girl in the family, Susan is wise, contemplative, and usually the one attempting to keep the peace between her three other siblings, Peter, Edmund, and Lucy. She has a great deal of empathy for all the creatures she encounters in Narnia, and seems to have an intuitive bond with the natural world. Susan and Lucy also have a deep connection with Aslan and are the ones who witness his death at the hands of the White Witch and his subsequent resurrection. By the end of her long reign as Queen of Narnia, Susan is well known as a peacemaker and ambassador.

Peter – Peter is Susan, Edmund, and Lucy's older brother. As the eldest of the four siblings, Peter is in many ways their natural leader. During the journey to Narnia, he proves himself to be brave and heroic, and his physical involvement in many fights and battles marks him as his siblings' foremost protector. During his reign as High King of Narnia, Peter is well known as a great warrior and leader.

Aslan – The rightful King of Narnia, Aslan is a talking lion of great and imposing stature. Aslan is so powerful that the mere mention of his name inspires strong feelings of terror and wonder in all who hear it; despite his great power, though, he is frequently absent from Narnia, and it is implied that he travels from world to world and realm to realm saving those in distress. Aslan is empathetic and kind, but his strong moral compass and decisive nature make him frightening, sometimes, to those who don't know him very well. He ultimately sacrifices himself to the White Witch in Edmund's place, and his death parallels the Passion and Crucifixion of Jesus Christ in the Christian Bible. Aslan is soon resurrected and helps Lucy, Susan, Edmund, and Peter restore harmony in the land.

The White Witch / The Queen – The pretender to the throne of Narnia, the White Witch calls herself Queen of the realm but is actually an evil, ancient entity determined to thwart the prophecy which foretells that four Sons of Adam and Daughters of Eve (Peter, Edmund, Susan, and Lucy) will one day sit on the Narnian thrones at Cair Paravel. The White Witch's imposition of an interminable winter—a winter without Christmas—is part of Lewis's allegorical exploration of Christian values. In depicting a Christmas-less winter brought on by an evil Queen, Lewis suggests the impoverishment and bleakness of a world without the light of Christianity. Strongly echoing the biblical story of the Passion and the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the White Witch taunts, tortures, and ultimately kills Aslan, the rightful King of Narnia, but he is soon resurrected.

The Professor – An old, unmarried man who takes in Lucy, Edmund, Susan, and Peter when they are sent away from London during the air-raids at the height of World War II. The children take a liking to the Professor right away, and believe that they will be able to get away with all kinds of mischief under his roof. The Professor does in fact prove him to be very lenient with the children, and very kind to them as well. He takes them at their word in all things—especially little Lucy, who faces her siblings' ridicule when she returns from her first visit to Narnia and finds that no one believes her about what she has seen there. The Professor is an ally to the children, and encourages them to support, love, and trust one another above all.

Mr. Beaver – A talking beaver and denizen of Narnia who helps three of the four siblings—Lucy, Susan, and Peter—to prepare for battle against the White Witch by sheltering them from danger and leading them to Aslan. Mr. Beaver is also the one who recognizes that Edmund is under the White Witch's spell and is not to be trusted.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Mrs. Macready – The Professor's housekeeper, a strict and imposing woman whom Lucy, Edmund, Susan, and Peter avoid at all costs. The first time the four siblings enter into Narnia together, they are hiding from Mrs. Macready in the wardrobe.

Mr. Tumnus – A kind talking Faun who has unwittingly found himself in the service of the evil White Witch. He befriends Lucy, and the two develop a fiercely loyal friendship.

Mrs. Beaver – Mr. Beaver's kind, nurturing wife.

Maugrim – A diabolical talking wolf who serves as the White Witch's head of security.

THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.

CHRISTIAN ALLEGORY

C.S. Lewis, a devout Christian, suffused his most famous work, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* with overt Christian symbolism and structured its conclusion around the resurrection of a Christ figure and a climactic battle for the very soul of Narnia. Lewis, however, did not set out to write a biblical allegory; rather, he wanted to imbue a fairy story with elements of the story of the Jesus Christ in order to allow children to see the miraculous elements of Christ's story in a new light—and perhaps relate to them anew and understand their wonder more deeply. Through the character of Aslan, and his role in Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy's story, Lewis created an allegory for the triumph of Christian ideology, and used *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* to subtly suggest that a world that rejects Christianity will be a poorer one marked by strife, suffering, and a literal winter of the soul. In contrast, a world that embraces Christlike values—turning the other cheek, honoring promises, and making sacrifices for others—will be full, bountiful, and prosperous.

The religious symbolism Lewis employs throughout the novel is pointed and ubiquitous. From Lucy's first solo journey through the wardrobe to the world on the other side, there is the sense that Lewis has created a world that is in dire need of deliverance. Lucy finds Narnia covered in snow her first time through the wardrobe. This initially gives the world a quiet, still magic, and Lucy, seeing the Faun Mr. Tumnus carrying packages in his arms, believes Christmas must be near. However, Tumnus reveals to her that the world of Narnia is under siege: the White Witch has made it so that it "always winter and never Christmas" in Narnia. This withholding of Christmas—the holiday commemorating the birth of Christ—is implied to be a purposeful withholding of the celebration of Jesus. Mr. Tumnus also notably refers to Lucy as a "Daughter of Eve"—the way Narnians refer to humans is Daughters of Eve for women, and Sons of Adam for men. This biblical reference points to humans as divine creations in God's image, and their fated destiny to rule Narnia above all of the other magical creatures who live there is in a way a divine right. Lucy and her siblings will be heralded as saviors or deliverers, destined to, alongside the mighty Aslan, pull Narnia from its eternal winter. Sin and corruption have come to roost in Narnia under the White Witch's rule, and Lewis uses the White Witch's forced perpetual winter as a metaphor for the desolation and emptiness of Narnia's soul in the absence of its ruler—the Christ figure Aslan.

Aslan is the most overt symbol of Christ in the novel; just the sound of the name inspires strong feelings in all who hear it. The first time Aslan is mentioned to the children, Edmund feels a "mysterious horror," Peter feels "suddenly brave," Susan feels something "delicious [or] delightful" float by her, and Lucy feels a sense of gleeful anticipation akin to the feeling of waking up on the first day of a holiday. Lewis is clearly using Aslan's ineffable power to echo the feelings of "horror" that sinners and liars such as Edmund feel at the mention of Christ, and the bravery, glee, and peace Christ's name inspires in his followers. Aslan's approach severely weakens the White Witch's power. After Edmund deserts the group to enter the employ of the White Witch, Mr. Beaver and Mrs. Beaver bring Peter, Susan, and Lucy to the Narnian landmark of the Stone Table to meet Aslan. Changes immediately begin to occur in the landscape. First, Father Christmas arrives at last to deliver presents and encouragement to Peter, Susan, and Lucy. Before he leaves, he shouts, "Merry Christmas! Long live the true King!" Though this is ostensibly a reference to Aslan (or the future High King Peter), it is also clearly a reference to Christ himself, the King of Kings. Meanwhile, as the White Witch travels to the Stone Table, she finds that the snow has begun to melt, severely impeding the movement of her sleigh. Lewis shows Aslan's power against the Witch—and, symbolically, Christianity's power against heretics and nonbelievers—to be powerful even from a distance. Lewis's belief in the almighty nature of Jesus Christ is evident as the novel speeds towards a climactic battle for Narnia's soul.

In the novel's climax, Aslan and the White Witch face off at the Stone Table—itself a biblical symbol reminiscent of the stone tablets bearing the commandments brought down from Sinai by Moses. The White Witch, with a coterie of giants, werewolves, and the spirits of trees behind her, confronts Aslan at the Table. Aslan has rescued Edmund from the Witch's clutches, but she now taunts the lion as she reminds him of the "Deep Magic" that the Emperor of Narnia put into the world "at the very beginning." Under this Deep Magic, every traitor belongs to the White Witch—Edmund, as a traitor, is hers to kill. In this way, she is an allegory for Satan, to whom sinners "belong" when they are sent to Hell. Aslan cannot deny the power of this Deep Magic, but he makes a deal with the White Witch, allowing her to kill him in Edmund's place. Thus, the most potent metaphor for the Passion and Crucifixion of Jesus Christ emerges. Aslan is led to the Stone Table by the Witch's attendants, and is taunted, shamed, and shaved of his mane. The Witch then kills Aslan, as a horrified Lucy and Susan look on. The Witch and her minions abandon Aslan's corpse, and Lucy and Susan attend to it, freeing him from his bonds. As the sun begins to rise, though, Aslan is resurrected before the girls' eyes, and the Stone Table cracks in two. As in the New

Testament, when Mary and Mary Magdalene attended Jesus's body ahead of his resurrection—during which Jesus rolled aside a stone boulder and emerged from his tomb— Lewis creates a profound and instantly recognizable image of Aslan as Narnia's immortal savior.

After Aslan's resurrection, a climactic battle ensues—Aslan and the four siblings are triumphant, and so Lewis's narrative confirms the inherent righteousness and ultimate unassailability of Christian values. The novel's central conflict is the struggle between Christianity's tenets of sacrifice, empathy, and striving towards goodness and godlessness, sin, and selfishness. In couching this struggle in symbol and metaphor and pitting Aslan and the White Witch against one another, Lewis literally lionizes Christianity and situates the religion's central story, the story of Jesus Christ, in a fantasy realm where its miraculous happenings and moral core can be viewed in a new light.

FANTASY, REALITY, AND ESCAPISM

The fantastical world of Narnia is one filled with magic, witches, talking animals, and mythical figures of fantasy and folklore—even Father Christmas makes an appearance there. In spite of the fantastical atmosphere, though, Narnia is not free from problems—in fact, when Lucy and her siblings arrive in Narnia, they find that it is a world in at least as bad a shape as their own. By denying the escapist possibilities of a utopian dream-world, Lewis makes Narnia a place where the children who venture there must actually face their problems. In doing so Lewis argues that true, pure fantasy does not exist at all, and suggests that no attempt at escaping one's problems or circumstances will ever prove fruitful—at least not for long.

Lucy first finds Narnia while exploring the Professor's house with her siblings. Lucy's escape into Narnia is doubly meaningful, as she and her siblings have already escaped their city, London, to avoid the violence and chaos of the air-raids during World War II. In showing Lucy's entry into Narnia as an escape from an escape, Lewis is already demonstrating how tempting and yet impossible it is to try to leave one's problems behind. Once in Narnia, Lucy believes she has entered a fairytale. She meets a kind Faun, Mr. Tumnus, who invites her to his cave for tea and a delicious meal, and tells her exciting stories about his life in the forest with Nymphs and Dryads. Lucy feels comforted, happy, and transported, but eventually decides she needs to return home, as her siblings must be worried for her. When she tells Mr. Tumnus she needs to leave, however, he becomes upset and starts sobbing. He reveals to Lucy that the White Witch, the ruler of Narnia, has commanded all Narnians to ensnare any "Sons of Adam" or "Daughters of Eve (humans) who come to Narnia and bring them to her. Lucy realizes that the world she has found herself in is not perfect, and is actually dangerous. Her escape into a fairy-world, then, becomes less of a fantasy and more of a nightmare.

Having been berated all week by her siblings for supposedly making up lies and fantasies, Lucy decides to use the wardrobe as a hiding place during a game of hide-and-seek and thus check, once and for all, whether the wardrobe really is a portal to another world. Lucy's escape from her siblings during a game of hide-and-seek—already situated within their escape from London—is set up to portend yet another confrontation with the inability to ever truly leave one's problems behind. Lewis complicates this new journey into Narnia by having Edmund follow Lucy into the wardrobe. Soon, Edmund finds himself in Narnia, but cannot find Lucy—instead, he comes face to face with the evil White Witch herself, who plies the greedy, suggestible Edmund with sweets and gets him to agree to lure the rest of his siblings to Narnia and bring them to the Witch. She promises Edmund that if he heeds her, he will one day be King; his desire to show up his siblings combined with the Witch's enchanted candies result in Edmund's capitulation to the queen. Edmund, as the second-youngest, is often picked on by his older siblings, and in Narnia he believes he has found a way to escape their taunts and finally prove himself as the most special and powerful of all four of them. Edmund will soon come to realize, though, that Narnia is not a place where the struggles of the real world melt away; rather, in Narnia the problems of life are magnified and battled out against an even more heightened backdrop.

All four siblings at last escape into Narnia together when they are hiding from the housekeeper, Mrs. Macready, and a party of sightseers she is bringing through the Professor's house—as it is a historic home, the children often have to evade tour groups passing through. The children escape the tour by hiding in the wardrobe—and soon find themselves in Narnia. As Peter and Susan marvel at their fantastical new surroundings, they, too, at first believe themselves to be in an "exciting" fantasy world. However, when they join Lucy and Edmund and make their way towards Mr. Tumnus's cave, they find that things are not at all what they seem to be. Mr. Tumnus's cave has been ransacked, and a sign on the door announces that Tumnus has been arrested for the charge of "High Treason against her Imperial Majesty Jadis, Queen of Narnia"—ostensibly for refusing to turn Lucy over to the White Witch. Peter and Susan too now see that Narnia is not a place where they can escape from their problems and lose themselves in fantasy—there is very real danger here, too, and they are at the very center of it. As the four siblings witness the chaos at Tumnus's house, they consider turning around and heading back for the Professor's; Susan is the first to suggest they abandon Narnia and return home. Lucy protests, though, insisting they must try to rescue Tumnus. Edmund wants to go home, too, but Susan then changes her tune, and admits that though she "wish[es they'd] never come" to Narnia, they cannot turn back now.

The first third of the novel consists of Lewis's attempt to

establish the impossibility of escapism in a world fraught with war, corruption, and pain. To leave one's problem's behind is an unrealistic wish, and as the children, one by one, find themselves pulled into the world of Narnia and forced to reckon with the evil and danger that exist there as well, they begin to realize that even fantasy worlds are not immune to suffering and strife.

WAR

When Lucy stumbles into the world of Narnia, she finds a mystical realm that at first seems full of only delights—mythical creatures, delicious food, and a wintry calm—but is soon revealed to be a world at war, just like the "real" world she comes from. As the four siblings explore Narnia more deeply, they come to understand that Narnia's problems mirror the problems of their own world. In creating a fantasy world whose wartime sense of fear and oppression mirrors the atmosphere of World War II England—and by unflinchingly demonstrating the horrors of war—Lewis suggests that war is an inescapable, unavoidable aspect of existence of any kind, and argues that ignoring or attempting to avoid battles for important causes will ultimately allow evil to prevail.

Lucy is only in Narnia a short while before the first Narnian she meets, the Faun Mr. Tumnus, reveals that his seemingly idyllic land is actually under siege, having fallen to the clutches of the evil White Witch. Lucy realizes she has left one war-torn world for another, and though she returns to the "real" world for a time, the dark truth of what is really happening in Narnia will propel her to return again—and to bring her siblings into the fold as well. The violence of World War II was unlike anything the world had yet seen. Not even a full generation removed from the horrors of World War I, World War II was less about trench warfare and hand-to-hand combat than it was about tactical deployment of advanced weaponry, mass destruction, and the extermination of Jews, Roma, homosexuals, and other religious and cultural minorities. This great physical and personal violence is reflected in the war taking place in Narnia, where a despotic ruler seeks to maintain power through unfair or "dirty" tactics (the use of magic, spells, enchantments, and the bewitched Turkish Delights that turn Edmund traitor to his own siblings) and the oppression of certain groups combined with the elevation of others (the Fauns, Nymphs, Dryads, and talking animals such as Mr. Beaver and Mrs. Beaver all seem to be under constant threat of being turned to stone by the Witch herself). As the four siblings explore more of Narnia and come to understand that the White Witch is only a pretender to the throne—the throne that is rightfully theirs—they find themselves deeply and intimately involved in the war in Narnia. Whereas in the "real" world, they were purposefully kept sheltered from the war and were removed from London, an epicenter of violence and danger, in the "fantasy" realm of Narnia the children are at the very center of the action. Lewis uses this coincidence and contradiction to reveal, perhaps, the siblings' underlying anxiety in their "real" lives about being unable to be part of the effort against World War II, as well as their fear of being casualties of its violence. In Narnia, not only are the children pulled into the fray, but they find themselves at the very heart of the battle—and able to, through their participation in it, turn the tides of the war between Aslan and the Witch. In the climactic battle scenes toward the end of the novel, Lewis does not shy away from depicting violence. Talking animals are turned to stone; Aslan is humiliated by the Witch and her evil coterie of monsters and then brutally murdered; Peter plunges his sword into the heart of the Witch's head guard, a wolf named Maugrim; Aslan mauls the Witch while dwarves raise their battleaxes, dogs gnash their teeth, Giants crush the enemy beneath their feet, and centaurs and unicorns trample the Witch's minions with their hooves. The violence, chaos, and bloodshed of the final battle is all there on the page—though there is terrible carnage and many casualties, Peter, Susan, and Edmund, and Lucy, in facing down their enemies, are ultimately able to turn the tides of war in Narnia and help good to prevail.

Set against the backdrop of one of the most terrible conflicts in human history, *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* examines the duality of the fight-or-flight impulse when it comes to war. The four siblings at the center of the story are drawn into the conflict in Narnia and forced to confront the horrors of war despite all of the adults in the "real" world's best efforts to shield them from it, and yet Lewis does not frame the children as victims or horrified onlookers. Rather, the siblings are eager to contribute to the war effort and conquer the forces of evil which threaten purity, goodness, and righteousness; in this way, Lewis warns that sticking one's head in the sand and avoiding pain, struggle, violence, or conflict will only result in the triumph of evil. necessary.

THE WISDOM OF CHILDREN

The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe is a children's story, one in which Lewis creates an environment where children have the most wisdom but the least influence. Not only do the four siblings at the heart of the novel feel underestimated by adults and barred from agency in their own lives, but they seem to have, at the start of the novel, internalized the ways the adult world has discounted them. When Lucy first finds Narnia in the back of the wardrobe, her other siblings don't believe her; it is only the Professor, their ward, who encourages the others to take Lucy seriously. As the novel unfolds and the siblings learn to stand in solidarity with one another and trust each other, Lewis uses their collective journey towards self-assurance and self-actualization to suggest that children should be taken seriously and believed more often than they are.

The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe is, at its core, a story about the maturation of the four young siblings who are the protagonists of the novel. Though at the start of the book they appear to be four ordinary children with little say in their own lives, as the text unfolds, each child gains compassion, confidence, and wisdom beyond their years. Having been shunted away from London and the violent air-raids occurring there, the children are initially given little agency in their own lives. The adults around them tell them what is best for them at every turn, and they spend much of their time at the Professor's house trying to stay out of the way of the domineering Mrs. Macready, the housekeeper. Only the Professor is an ally to the children—but he is often shut up in his study or is not to be found in the house at all.

In Narnia, the children are treated with a kind of respect and reverence they rarely encountered in their own world. Upon their arrival in Narnia, the children are hailed as the "Sons of Adam" and "Daughters of Eve" foretold to rule Narnia in an ancient prophecy. As such, they are regarded as wise, capable, and even holy by all they encounter—including the White Witch, who is bent on their destruction and sees them as a powerful threat to her own claim to the throne. After the climactic battle in which Aslan defeats the White Witch, the four children are installed as joint rulers of Narnia. The narrative then speeds up, charting their peaceful and prosperous reign, and follows them as they grow older and become sage, wise rulers. They crusade endlessly against the Witch's remaining followers, they implement diplomatic foreign policy with "countries beyond the sea," and they become adults: Peter grows into a "great warrior," Susan becomes a "gracious woman" known as Susan the gentle, Edmund as an adult is "grave and quiet," and Lucy becomes "Queen Lucy the Valiant." Indeed, the four siblings, over time, remember their lives in the "real" world "only as one remembers a dream." In a scene towards the end of the novel, the four ride together on a stag hunt, and eventually come to the lamppost that serves as the marker of the boundary between Narnia and the world they left behind. In lofty, nearly Shakespearean speech (no doubt meant to communicate how wise and refined the siblings have become), the siblings consider how familiar the lamppost looks, and yet resolve to continue their hunt. As they pass through a thicket of trees, they soon find themselves "making their way not through branches but through coats," and soon are tumbling together out of the wardrobe, finding that they have not, in fact, aged even a minute since the last time they entered the wardrobe. The narrative does not linger on the moment the children emerge for the wardrobe, but the disorientation and confusion the "Kings and Queens" of Narnia—having, from their point of view, lived out years and years of adult life full of tremendous responsibility and pressure—feel upon returning to the "real world" is palpable. The children have all their experiences of ruling Narnia still fresh in their minds, along with all the attendant wisdom their tenure as rulers provided, and yet they are right back where they started, still firmly in their youths and fearful of being underestimated because of it. When the children run to the Professor with their fantastical tale, he believes them at their word. He tells them not to fret about returning—"Once a King in Narnia, always a king in Narnia," he says—and urges them to keep quiet about their adventure, but to keep an eye out for others who have "had adventures of the same sort." The children will know these individuals, he foretells, by the "odd things they say," and "even their looks." Here, Lewis uses the Professor to demonstrate the value of believing in children, validating their thoughts, and assuring their worth. Through the Professor's speech to the children, he also implies that those who have been through a similar journey to the children's—whether literal or metaphorical—are wiser than the rest of the world, and that this wisdom can be easily detected.

In sending the four siblings at the heart of *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* on a great and terrible journey through a war-torn world that mirrors their own, Lewis argues that children can accrue wisdom in unexpected places. In the ending of the book, Lewis suggests that children's opinions, feelings, and beliefs are often discounted just because of their youth, even though they may have had profound or incommunicable life experiences that have made them wise beyond their years.

SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in blue text throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.

FATHER CHRISTMAS

In *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, Father Christmas symbolizes the benevolence and bounty Christianity has to offer. Lucy's first friend in Narnia—a Faun named Mr. Tumnus—tells her that because the evil White Witch placed herself on the throne, it is "always winter but never Christmas" in Narnia. In a book whose central thematic preoccupation is Christianity, the forever-winter the White Witch has imposed on Narnia can be seen as the spiritual impoverishment and literal winter of the soul that estrangement from Christianity engenders. The cold is brutal and debilitating, but as the true King of Narnia, Aslan, approaches the land, the snow begins to thaw. On their way to meet up with Aslan, the children run into Father Christmas; he has come bearing presents for the Beavers, as well as Lucy, Susan, and Peter. The gifts he gives the three siblings are not mere toys, but "tools" that he urges them to use in the upcoming battle against the Witch. Here, Lewis is demonstrating how Christianity, which is the essence of goodness and benevolence, also equips its adherents with "tools" needed to traverse the world and battle temptation,

cruelty, and evil. As Father Christmas departs, he wishes all the children a Merry Christmas—and then calls out, "Long live the true King." Though Father Christmas in this instance is referring to Aslan, the true King of Narnia, his words undeniably echo Christians' belief in Jesus Christ as the one true King, and the ultimate deliverer of his followers from sin and evil.

QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the HarperCollins edition of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* published in 1950.

Chapter 2 Quotes

"But what have you done?" asked Lucy.

"My old father, now," said Mr. Tumnus; "that's his picture over the mantelpiece. He would never have done a thing like this."

"A thing like what?" said Lucy.

"Like what I've done," said the Faun. "Taken service under the White Witch. That's what I am. I'm in the pay of the White Witch."

"The White Witch? Who is she?"

"Why, it is she that has got all Narnia under her thumb. It's she that makes it always winter. Always winter and never Christmas; think of that!"

"How awful!" said Lucy.

Related Characters: Lucy, Mr. Tumnus (speaker), The White Witch / The Queen

Related Themes:

Page Number: 19

Explanation and Analysis

Mr. Tumnus, who is the first creature Lucy meets in Narnia, has just fed her, sheltered her, and told her exciting tales of Narnia. When Lucy asks to return home, though, Mr. Tumnus breaks down in tears, and in this passage begins to confess the truth—he is in the employ of the despotic ruler of Narnia, the White Witch. Mr. Tumnus's statement that it is "always winter and never Christmas" in Narnia is part of C.S. Lewis's insertion of a Christian allegory into the narrative; Christmas, the holiday celebrating the birth of Christ, has been banned in Narnia, and instead it is only ever cold, damp, and miserable. This sets up Narnia as a realm in crisis, and subverts traditional ideas of fantasy worlds as places of bliss and utopia.

"I had orders from the White Witch that if ever I saw a Son of Adam or a Daughter of Eve in the wood, I was to catch them and hand them over to her. And you are the first I've ever met. And I've pretended to be your friend and asked you to tea, and all the time I've been meaning to wait till you were asleep and then go and tell Her."

"Oh, but you won't, Mr. Tumnus," said Lucy. "You won't, will you? Indeed, indeed you really mustn't."

"And if I don't," said he, beginning to cry again, "she's sure to find out. And she'll have my tail cut off, and my horns sawn off, and my beard plucked out, and she'll wave her wand over my beautiful cloven hoofs and turn them into horrid solid hoofs like a wretched horse's. And if she is extra and specially angry she'll turn me into stone and I shall be only a statue of a Faun in her horrible house until the four thrones at Cair Paravel are filled-and goodness knows when that will happen, or whether it will ever happen at all."

Related Characters: Lucy, Mr. Tumnus (speaker), The White Witch / The Queen

Related Themes:

Page Number: 20

Explanation and Analysis

As Mr. Tumnus continues to explain the situation in Narnia to Lucy, he reveals that the specific task he has been given is to surrender any human he finds to the White Witch. A prophecy foretells that when "Sons of Adam" and "Daughters of Eve" fill the four thrones at Cair Paravel, the Witch will be unseated from her throne. Just as Narnia is in the midst of a war, Mr. Tumnus is at war with himself. He knows that should he dissent from the White Witch, he faces painful personal consequences, and yet he is too good inside to betray his true beliefs or harm another being.

Chapter 4 Quotes

❝ While he was eating the Queen kept asking him questions. At first Edmund tried to remember that it is rude to speak with one's mouth full, but soon he forgot about this and thought only of trying to shovel down as much Turkish Delight as he could, and the more he ate the more he wanted to eat, and he never asked himself why the Queen should be so inquisitive. She got him to tell her that he had one brother and two sisters, and that one of his sisters had already been in Narnia and had met a Faun there, and that no one except himself and his brother and his sisters knew anything about Narnia. She seemed especially interested in the fact that there were four of them, and kept on coming back to it. "You are sure there are just four of you?" she asked. "Two Sons of Adam and two Daughters of Eve, neither more nor less?" and Edmund, with his mouth full of Turkish Delight, kept on saying, "Yes, I told you that before," and forgetting to call her "Your Majesty," but she didn't seem to mind now. At last the Turkish Delight was all finished and Edmund was looking very hard at the empty box and wishing that she would ask him whether he would like some more. Probably the Queen knew quite well what he was thinking; for she knew, though Edmund did not, that this was enchanted Turkish Delight and that anyone who had once tasted it would want more and more of it, and would even, if they were allowed, go on eating it till they killed themselves.

Related Characters: Edmund, The White Witch / The Queen (speaker), Lucy, Susan, Peter

Related Themes:

Page Number: 37

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, the Witch begins her seduction of Edmund and conscripts him into her service. The enchanted Turkish Delight that the Queen uses to plunge Edmund into a state of bliss is reminiscent of the intoxicating lotus flowers in the *Odyssey*—those who eat the flowers forget everything but their overwhelming desire to eat more lotuses. The dark magic the Queen uses to imbue the candy with an irresistible quality renders anyone who consumes it a slave to the Witch's power; the poor Edmund, who has already been shown to be a conflicted and attention-hungry little boy, is now lulled into a sense of comfort with the Witch, and through forces beyond his control is lured into her war games.

Chapter 5 Quotes

❝ "Peter! Susan! It's all true. Edmund has seen it too. There is a country you can get to through the wardrobe. Edmund and I both got in. We met one another in there, in the wood. Go on, Edmund; tell them all about it."

"What's all this about, Ed?" said Peter.

And now we come to one of the nastiest things in this story. Up to that moment Edmund had been feeling sick, and sulky, and annoyed with Lucy for being right, but he hadn't made up his mind what to do. When Peter suddenly asked him the question he decided all at once to do the meanest and most spiteful thing he could think of. He decided to let Lucy down.

"Tell us, Ed," said Susan.

And Edmund gave a very superior look as if he were far older than Lucy (there was really only a year's difference) and then a little snigger and said, "Oh, yes, Lucy and I have been playing—pretending that all her story about a country in the wardrobe is true. Just for fun, of course. There's nothing there really."

Related Characters: Lucy, Edmund, Susan, Peter (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 44-45

Explanation and Analysis

After Edmund follows Lucy through to Narnia and sees that the world is real after all, Lucy is excited to finally have someone who will back her up. When the two of them return to the real world, though, Edmund consciously decides to lie and betray Lucy, consequently making himself feel superior. Edmund, who has been duped by the White Witch and her enchanted candies, is clearly conflicted and disoriented. His decision to cruelly abandon his sister in this way reveals how little regard he has for her emotions, and foreshadows the greater ways in which he will betray Lucy, Peter, and Susan as the novel continues to unfold.

Chapter 6 Quotes

❝ "So you really were here," [Peter] said, "that time Lu said she'd met you in here—and you made out she was telling lies."

There was a dead silence. "Well, of all the poisonous little beasts—" said Peter, and shrugged his shoulders and said no more. There seemed, indeed, no more to say, and presently the four resumed their journey; but Edmund was saying to himself. "I'll pay you all out for this, you pack of stuck-up, self-satisfied prigs."

Related Characters: Peter (speaker), Lucy, Edmund

Related Themes:

Page Number: 56

Explanation and Analysis

When all of the children at last arrive in Narnia together, it becomes evident that Edmund has, in fact, been to the realm before, and was lying when he claimed that he was just playing along with Lucy's delusions. His siblings berate him for having been such a "poisonous little beast," and Edmund secretly begins dreaming of revenge against them. Edmund's feelings of inadequacy and alienation from his siblings are compounded by the insidious enchantment that the evil White Witch has placed upon him. If there was ever any question as to whether Edmund would actually go through with his promise to the Witch and hand his siblings over to her, this moment cements Edmund's desire not just to prove himself as superior but to actively see his siblings suffer.

"I-I wonder if there's any point in going on," said Susan. "I mean, it doesn't seem particularly safe here and it looks as if it won't be much fun either. And it's getting colder every minute, and we've brought nothing to eat. What about just going home?"

"Oh, but we can't, we can't," said Lucy suddenly; "don't you see? We can't just go home, not after this. It is all on my account that the poor Faun has got into this trouble. He hid me from the Witch and showed me the way back. That's what it means by comforting the Queen's enemies and fraternizing with Humans. We simply must try to rescue him."

[...]

"I've a horrid feeling that Lu is right," said Susan. "I don't want to go a step further and I wish we'd never come. But I think we must try to do something for Mr. Whatever-his-name-is—I mean the Faun."

Related Characters: Lucy, Susan (speaker), Edmund, Peter, Mr. Tumnus

Related Themes:

Page Number: 59-60

Explanation and Analysis

When confronted with the destruction at Mr. Tumnus's cave, Lucy and her siblings realize that the conflict in Narnia is more real—and more violent—than they imagined. The siblings consider running for home and saving themselves, avoiding involvement in the war in Narnia altogether; but as they consider how involved they already are, and what it would mean to abandon innocent people to the whims of a tyrant, they realize that they must stay in Narnia and help however they can. One of the major themes of the novel is the need to fight against evil, cruelty, and tyranny rather than bury one's head in the sand to avoid conflict and even outright war, and in this passage, Lewis shows that even children have the wisdom to know what is right in such situations.

Chapter 7 Quotes

"They say Aslan is on the move—perhaps has already landed."

And now a very curious thing happened. None of the children knew who Aslan was any more than you do; but the moment the Beaver had spoken these words everyone felt quite different. Perhaps it has sometimes happened to you in a dream that someone says something which you don't understand but in the dream it feels as if it had some enormous meaning—either a terrifying one which turns the whole dream into a nightmare or else a lovely meaning too lovely to put into words, which makes the dream so beautiful that you remember it all your life and are always wishing you could get into that dream again. It was like that now. At the name of Aslan each one of the children felt something jump in its inside. Edmund felt a sensation of mysterious horror. Peter felt suddenly brave and adventurous. Susan felt as if some delicious smell or some delightful strain of music had just floated by her. And Lucy got the feeling you have when you wake up in the morning and realize that it is the beginning of the holidays or the beginning of summer.

Related Characters: Mr. Beaver (speaker), Lucy, Edmund, Susan, Peter, Aslan

Related Themes:

Page Number: 67-68

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Aslan's name is mentioned for the first time in the novel. Though the children do not yet know who Aslan is, what he looks like, what he stands for, or what his purpose in Narnia is, the mere mention of his name inspires intense feelings in each of the siblings. *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* is a Christian allegory—and the figure symbolic of Christ is the imposing and righteous King of

Narnia, the great lion Aslan. Lewis uses this passage to demonstrate how the mere mention of Jesus Christ can create similarly deep feelings in real people. Though not everyone will feel the bravery, comfort, delight, and excitement that Lucy, Peter, and Susan experience—some will actually feel "mysterious horror" at the mention of Christ, echoing how Edmund reacts to Aslan's name—Christ's power is undeniable, and so is Aslan's.

Chapter 8 Quotes

"Is he—quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion."

"That you will, dearie, and no mistake," said Mrs. Beaver; "if there's anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking, they're either braver than most or else just silly."

"Then he isn't safe?" said Lucy.

"Safe?" said Mr. Beaver; "don't you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you."

"I'm longing to see him," said Peter, "even if I do feel frightened when it comes to the point."

[...]

"The quickest way you can help [Mr. Tumnus] is by going to meet Aslan," said Mr. Beaver, "once he's with us, then we can begin doing things. Not that we don't need you too. For that's another of the old rhymes:

When Adam's flesh and Adam's bone Sits at Cair Paravel in throne,

The evil time will be over and done.

So things must be drawing near their end now he's come and you've come."

Related Characters: Lucy, Susan, Peter, Mr. Beaver, Mrs. Beaver (speaker), Aslan, Mr. Tumnus

Related Themes:

Page Number: 80-81

Explanation and Analysis

As the children ask Mr. Beaver to tell them all about Aslan, Mr. Beaver paints a picture of Aslan as a terrible and imposing—but wholly good and righteous—ruler of Narnia. This description of Aslan underscores that he is the story's Christ figure, possessing the same qualities of strength, power, and righteousness that Christ does. Mr. Beaver has faith that Aslan can solve all problems, and will surely be able to help the children take their rightful place on the thrones at Cair Paravel, thus ridding Narnia of the Witch's evil. Though Mr. Beaver clearly reveres Aslan, as he begins discussing the children's role in Narnia's fate, it becomes clear that perhaps the children have just as much power as Aslan.

Chapter 9 Quotes

You mustn't think that even now Edmund was quite so bad that he actually wanted his brother and sisters to be turned into stone. He did want Turkish Delight and to be a Prince (and later a King) and to pay Peter out for calling him a beast. As for what the Witch would do with the others, he didn't want her to be particularly nice to them—certainly not to put them on the same level as himself; but he managed to believe, or to pretend he believed, that she wouldn't do anything very bad to them, "Because," he said to himself, "all these people who say nasty things about her are her enemies and probably half of it isn't true. She was jolly nice to me, anyway, much nicer than they are. I expect she is the rightful Queen really. Anyway, she'll be better than that awful Aslan!" At least, that was the excuse he made in his own mind for what he was doing. It wasn't a very good excuse, however, for deep down inside him he really knew that the White Witch was bad and cruel.

Related Characters: Edmund (speaker), Lucy, Susan, Peter, Aslan, The White Witch / The Queen

Related Themes:

Page Number: 89

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Lewis explores the complex feelings Edmund is experiencing as he abandons his siblings in order to visit the White Witch. Rather than making Edmund purely evil, self-serving, or traitorous, Lewis instead imbues his most complicated character with feelings of real conflict and denial. Deep down, Edmund knows what is right—but he has been so warped by the Witch's magic and his own insecurities about his relationship to his siblings that he consciously tries to delude himself into believing that the "wrong" thing will still somehow fulfill him. Lewis uses Edmund's conflict to explore the larger moral and intellectual wrestling that nonbelievers and those questioning their faith in Christianity experience; by showing the power of the human mind to make excuses for poor actions or self-destructive behavior, Lewis demonstrates how many individuals allow themselves to be

led astray from goodness and righteousness and actually gravitate towards spitefulness and cruelty.

❝ And he stood there gloating over the stone lion, and presently he did something very silly and childish. He took a stump of lead pencil out of his pocket and scribbled a moustache on the lion's upper lip and then a pair of spectacles on its eyes. Then he said, "Yah! Silly old Aslan! How do you like being a stone? You thought yourself mighty fine, didn't you?" But in spite of the scribbles on it the face of the great stone beast still looked so terrible, and sad, and noble, staring up in the moonlight, that Edmund didn't really get any fun out of jeering at it. He turned away and began to cross the courtyard.

Related Characters: Edmund (speaker), Aslan, The White Witch / The Queen

Related Themes:

Page Number: 96

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Edmund, who has just arrived at the Witch's courtyard, defaces a lion she has turned to stone. Edmund does not entirely believe that the stone lion is in fact Aslan himself, but attempts to humiliate the insensate object anyway—perhaps to prove to himself that he does not believe in Aslan, and is loyal only to the Witch. Edmund finds that even with the silly mustache, the lion is still imposing and "noble"; Edmund's cruelty has only reflected poorly back on him. This passage functions as Christian allegory in that it shows how even those who attempt to deny or outright denigrate Christ will find that their actions just bounce back to them and make them feel even more unsatisfied and empty.

Chapter 10 Quotes

❝ "Come on!" cried Mr. Beaver, who was almost dancing with delight. "Come and see! This is a nasty knock for the Witch! It looks as if her power is already crumbling."

[...]

It was a sledge, and it was reindeer with bells on their harness. [...] And on the sledge sat a person whom everyone knew the moment they set eyes on him. He was a huge man in a bright red robe (bright as hollyberries) with a hood that had fur inside it and a great white beard that fell like a foamy waterfall over his chest. Everyone knew him because, though you see people of his sort only in Narnia, you see pictures of them and hear them talked about even in our world—the world on this side of the wardrobe door. But when you really see them in Narnia it is rather different. Some of the pictures of Father Christmas in our world make him look only funny and jolly. But now that the children actually stood looking at him they didn't find it quite like that. He was so big, and so glad, and so real, that they all became quite still. They felt very glad, but also solemn.

"I've come at last," said he. "She has kept me out for a long time, but I have got in at last. Aslan is on the move. The Witch's magic is weakening."

Related Characters: Mr. Beaver (speaker), Lucy, Susan, Peter, The White Witch / The Queen, Mrs. Beaver

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 106-107

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Mr. Beaver is delighted when he realizes that Father Christmas has at last arrived in Narnia. There has not been a Christmas in Narnia for a very long while, though it has been perpetual winter for eons—Father Christmas's arrival, then, heralds the end of the Witch's reign. His joyful arrival also signals to the beleaguered residents of Narnia that their land is soon going to be their own again, and their rituals and traditions will be theirs to practice and enjoy freely. Father Christmas is a symbol of Christianity's bounty, and the ways in which it rewards belief and faith. In this novel, Lewis uses Father Christmas's return to denote how Christianity literally rewards believers and adherents who remain faithful—even in the face of endless winter without the balm and bright spot Christmas brings.

Chapter 11 Quotes

❝ Now they were steadily racing on again. And soon Edmund noticed that the snow which splashed against them as they rushed through it was much wetter than it had been all last night. At the same time he noticed that he was feeling much less cold. It was also becoming foggy. In fact every minute it grew foggier and warmer. And the sledge was not running nearly as well as it had been running up till now. [...] The sledge jerked, and skidded and kept on jolting as if it had struck against stones. And however the dwarf whipped the poor reindeer the sledge went slower and slower. There also seemed to be a curious noise all round them, but the noise of their driving and jolting and the dwarf's shouting at the reindeer prevented Edmund from hearing what it was, until suddenly the sledge stuck so fast that it wouldn't go on at all. When that happened there was a moment's silence. And in that silence Edmund could at last listen to the other noise properly. [...] All round them though out of sight there were streams, chattering, murmuring, bubbling, splashing and even (in the distance) roaring. And his heart gave a great leap (though he hardly knew why) when he realized that the frost was over.

Related Characters: Edmund, The White Witch / The Queen

Related Themes:

Page Number: 117-118

Explanation and Analysis

Edmund is firmly in the White Witch's clutches in this passage—he has abandoned his siblings for her in hopes of securing glory and comfort for himself. And yet, as he witnesses her true power and cruelty, he begins to second-guess his allegiance to her. In this passage, she drags Edmund across the countryside in pursuit of Aslan, but her perpetual winter begins to thaw, and spring arrives in earnest. Edmund finds himself feeling excited and joyful at this—he has realized that the White Witch is evil and does not have his best interest at heart. As Aslan's approach weakens the Witch's power over the landscape, so too does her hold over Edmund begin to wane.

Chapter 12 Quotes

❝ But as for Aslan himself, the Beavers and the children didn't know what to do or say when they saw him. People who have not been in Narnia sometimes think that a thing cannot be good and terrible at the same time. If the children had ever thought so, they were cured of it now. For when they tried to look at Aslan's face they just caught a glimpse of the golden mane and the great, royal, solemn, overwhelming eyes; and then they found they couldn't look at him and went all trembly.

Related Characters: Lucy, Susan, Peter, Aslan, Mr. Beaver, Mrs. Beaver

Related Themes:

Page Number: 126

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, the Beavers take Susan, Lucy, and Peter to the Stone Table to meet with Aslan about how to dethrone the White Witch. The children have heard of Aslan many times since they arrived in Narnia, and even the very first mention of his name stirred deep feelings up within each of them. Now, as they come face to face with him for the first time at the Stone Table, the siblings find themselves so awestruck by his visage that they can barely look directly at him. As Aslan is a Christ figure and a major symbol in Lewis's Christian allegory, Lewis is, in this passage, attempting to convey the radiance, grandeur, and power not just of Aslan but also of Jesus Christ.

Chapter 14 Quotes

❝ At last the rabble had had enough of this. They began to drag the bound and muzzled Lion to the Stone Table, some pulling and some pushing. He was so huge that even when they got him there it took all their efforts to hoist him onto the surface of it. Then there was more tying and tightening of cords.

"The cowards! The cowards!" sobbed Susan. "Are they still afraid of him, even now?"

Related Characters: Susan (speaker), Lucy, Aslan, The White Witch / The Queen

Related Themes:

Page Number: 154

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Aslan has willingly walked through the

forest to the Stone Table to be sacrificed. He has struck a deal with the White Witch for Edmund's soul—as she is, according to the "Deep Magic" that governs Narnia, the owner of all traitors within the realm, she has a claim on Edmund. Aslan has traded his own life for Edmund's, and now, as he makes good on his bargain with the evil Witch, her followers and minions taunt, jeer, and abuse Aslan. As Susan and Lucy watch Aslan allow himself to be humiliated, Susan realizes that perhaps the Witch's followers are torturing Aslan in order to assuage their own fear of him—by making him small and pathetic, they can feel better about themselves. As Aslan is a Christ figure—and this moment mirrors the Passion of Jesus Christ, in which he was brutally whipped and tortured in the moments before his Crucifixion—Lewis is implying that those who tortured and murdered Jesus Christ did so because they knew his power and feared it.

Chapter 15 Quotes

❝ As soon as the wood was silent again Susan and Lucy crept out onto the open hilltop. The moon was getting low and thin clouds were passing across her, but still they could see the shape of the Lion lying dead in his bonds. And down they both knelt in the wet grass and kissed his cold face and stroked his beautiful fur—what was left of it—and cried till they could cry no more. And then they looked at each other and held each other's hands for mere loneliness and cried again; and then again were silent.

Related Characters: Lucy, Susan, Aslan

Related Themes:

Page Number: 157

Explanation and Analysis

The Witch kills Aslan in a painful and climactic moment, and Susan and Lucy believe that the King of Narnia has been defeated forever. Feeling that all hope is lost, the girls can think of nothing to do but attempt to restore some dignity to Aslan. They cry over him and tenderly attend to his body. As they do, they mirror directly the actions of the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene, who attended Christ during and after his Crucifixion. As the novel is a Christian allegory, this moment allows young readers to see a familiar—or even foreign—moment through a new lens, and thus experience the story of Christ in a way that perhaps allows them to relate to it in a different or more profound way.

❝ "Oh, you're real, you're real! Oh, Aslan!" cried Lucy, and both girls flung themselves upon him and covered him with kisses.

"But what does it all mean?" asked Susan when they were somewhat calmer.

"It means," said Aslan, "that though the Witch knew the Deep Magic, there is a magic deeper still which she did not know. Her knowledge goes back only to the dawn of time. But if she could have looked a little further back, into the stillness and the darkness before Time dawned, she would have read there a different incantation. She would have known that when a willing victim who had committed no treachery was killed in a traitor's stead, the Table would crack and Death itself would start working backward. And now—"

"Oh yes. Now?" said Lucy, jumping up and clapping her hands.

"Oh, children," said the Lion, "I feel my strength coming back to me."

Related Characters: Lucy, Susan, Aslan (speaker), The White Witch / The Queen

Related Themes:

Page Number: 163

Explanation and Analysis

After Aslan is killed on the Stone Table, and after Lucy and Susan spend the night weeping over his corpse and slowly, painstakingly removing his binds and tenderly petting his fur, Aslan is resurrected in a dramatic moment. As the sun rises, the Stone Table cracks, and Aslan comes back to life. Susan and Lucy are overwhelmed and thrilled to see Aslan, and as he explains the story of his resurrection, he reveals that his willingness to sacrifice himself on Edmund's behalf is the reason he was able to return to Narnia. This moment is the most pointed reference to Jesus Christ, who gave himself willingly for the sins of others and was resurrected after three days. Aslan's return, though hastened a bit, almost directly parallels that of Christ, emphasizing the selflessness and power of both figures.

Chapter 16 Quotes

"And now! Those who can't keep up—that is, children, dwarfs, and small animals—must ride on the backs of those who can—that is, lions, centaurs, unicorns, horses, giants and eagles. Those who are good with their noses must come in the front with us lions to smell out where the battle is. Look lively and sort yourselves."

And with a great deal of bustle and cheering they did. The most pleased of the lot was the other lion who kept running about everywhere pretending to be very busy but really in order to say to everyone he met, "Did you hear what he said? Us Lions—That means him and me. Us Lions. That's what I like about Aslan. No side, no stand-off-ishness. Us Lions. That meant him and me."

Related Characters: Aslan (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 174

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Aslan rallies the animals and creatures he has just revived from their stone prisons behind his cause. He urges the strong to help the weak, and yet even though he is clearly the commander-in-chief of the battle, does not position himself as better than his soldiers or apart from them. One of the other lions remarks on how kind and good it is that Aslan, despite his role as King, does not see himself as above any of his followers. Aslan, as a Christ figure throughout the novel, is in this passage shown to espouse many of the values that have made Christ himself such a holy figure: selflessness, humility, and belief in the equality and value of all creatures.

Chapter 17 Quotes

"It was all Edmund's doing, Aslan," Peter was saying. "We'd have been beaten if it hadn't been for him. The Witch was turning our troops into stone right and left. But nothing would stop him. He fought his way through three ogres to where she was just turning one of your leopards into a statue. And when he reached her he had sense to bring his sword smashing down on her wand in- stead of trying to go for her directly and simply getting made a statue himself for his pains. That was the mistake all the rest were making. Once her wand was broken we began to have some chance—if we hadn't lost so many already. He was terribly wounded. We must go and see him."

Related Characters: Peter (speaker), Edmund, Aslan, The White Witch / The Queen

Related Themes:

Page Number: 178-179

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Edmund, who has struggled throughout the novel with deceitful and dark impulses, is at last redeemed. Peter, the de facto leader of his siblings as the oldest among them—and certainly the most skilled warrior of them all—here credits Edmund with winning the battle for them. Edmund's wisdom in destroying the Witch's knife saved many lives, and Lewis implies that Edmund's wisdom and practicality in this situation was only gained through the time he spent in the Queen's thrall. Edmund suffered and betrayed his siblings, but his journey through a tumultuous time and a moral conflict was not in vain; the struggle allowed him to emerge with an advantage over the Witch, and with a renewed sense of wisdom, clarity, and determination to prove himself. Lewis demonstrates through Edmund's journey how suffering can ultimately lead to redemption—a major theme within Christianity.

"I know not how it is, but this lamp on the post worketh upon me strangely. It runs in my mind that I have seen the like before; as it were in a dream, or in the dream of a dream."

"Sir," answered they all, "it is even so with us also."

"And more," said Queen Lucy, "for it will not go out of my mind that if we pass this post and lantern either we shall find strange adventures or else some great change of our fortunes."

"Madam," said King Edmund, "the like foreboding stirreth in my heart also."

"And in mine, fair brother," said King Peter.

"And in mine too," said Queen Susan. "Wherefore by my counsel we shall lightly return to our horses and follow this White Stag no further."

"Madam," said King Peter, "therein I pray thee to have me excused. For never since we four were Kings and Queens in Narnia have we set our hands to any high matter, as battles, quests, feats of arms, acts of justice, and the like, and then given over; but always what we have taken in hand, the same we have achieved."

"Sister," said Queen Lucy, "my royal brother speaks rightly. And it seems to me we should be shamed if for any fearing or foreboding we turned back from following so noble a beast as now we have in chase."

Related Characters: Lucy, Edmund, Susan, Peter (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 186-187

Explanation and Analysis

In the novel's final chapter, Lewis fast-forwards through several years in the siblings' lives and shows them growing into their roles as rulers of Narnia. They become diplomats, soldiers, and judges, and grow older and wiser. One day, hunting a mythical stag, the siblings encounter the lamp-post that marks the boundary between Narnia and the "real" world—though indeed the children have forgotten their "real" lives, and have only faint memories of the lamp-post. The brave siblings, though, do not shy away from the foreboding feeling the lamp-post gives them, and travel on through the wood. Here, Lewis is demonstrating the wisdom the children have accrued—when they return to the real world in just a few moments, they will find that they have not aged a day. However, the experiences they've had in Narnia feel as real to them as anything else, and they have in fact lived full, varied lives, and Lewis implies that they will carry the wisdom they've gleaned through them back into their "actual" lives.

> The Professor, who was a very remarkable man, didn't tell them not to be silly or not to tell lies, but believed the whole story. "No," he said, "I don't think it will be any good trying to go back through the wardrobe door to get the coats. You won't get into Narnia again by that route. Nor would the coats be much use by now if you did! Eh? What's that? Yes, of course you'll get back to Narnia again someday. Once a King in Narnia, always a King in Narnia. But don't go trying to use the same route twice. Indeed, don't try to get there at all. It'll happen when you're not looking for it. And don't talk too much about it even among yourselves. And don't mention it to anyone else unless you find that they've had adventures of the same sort themselves. What's that? How will you know? Oh, you'll know all right. Odd things they say—even their looks—will let the secret out. Keep your eyes open."

Related Characters: The Professor (speaker), Lucy, Edmund, Susan, Peter

Related Themes:

Page Number: 188-189

Explanation and Analysis

In the novel's final passages, the children bring the tale of their adventures to the Professor in an attempt to explain why four valuable fur coats are missing from his wardrobe. The Professor believes the children's every word—and, more than that, seems to imply that he himself has been to Narnia and back at least once. His intonation of the familiar refrain Aslan uttered during the children's coronation—"Once a King in Narnia, always a King in Narnia"—demonstrates that he has an intimate knowledge of Narnia and its rules. He urges the children to keep their experience quiet, and savor it for themselves—but at the same time, warns them to "keep [their] eyes open" for signs of others who have been to Narnia, further implying that those with knowledge of the fantastical realm are far greater in number than it would seem.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

CHAPTER 1: LUCY LOOKS INTO A WARDROBE

Siblings Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy have been sent away from London to the countryside because of the air-raids taking place in the city—it is the height of World War II. The siblings have been sent to live with a man known only as the Professor. He is very old, unmarried, and the children all like him because they believe he will let them do "anything [they] like." As the children settle into their new home their first night, they bicker and argue with one another—Lucy, the youngest, worries that they will get in trouble for talking so loud, but Peter, the eldest, points out that the house is so large that no one can hear anything the four of them get up to. Peter urges his siblings to go to sleep, promising to lead an expedition to explore the grounds of their new home in the morning.

Lucy, Edmund, Susan, and Peter are thrust into a new situation and new surroundings, with only each other to cling to for support. In escaping the war, they are being shielded from horror and danger, but it is clear that their new circumstances have kicked up feelings of fear and uncertainty. This is what is causing them to bicker and take their pain and trepidation out on each other. This moment sets up the way the siblings will relate to one another, and their surroundings, as the novel unfolds.

The next morning, though, it is raining. Edmund grumbles about the bad weather, but Susan urges him to cheer up; Peter offers to take Edmund and the others exploring inside of the massive house rather than outside. As the children peek into the spare rooms, they discover halls full of paintings, musical instruments, suits of armor, and very old books. One room has nothing inside of it but a large wardrobe. Peter, declaring there's nothing to see in the room, leads the others onward, but Lucy stays behind, curious about what is inside the wardrobe.

The old house the four siblings are living in is like a magical realm of its own, with much to explore and learn. The children are inquisitive and eager to find new adventures, foreshadowing how they will react when they are thrust into the fantasy realm of Narnia.

Lucy opens the door and finds several long fur coats hanging inside. She loves the smell and feel of fur, and so she steps up into the wardrobe to rub her face on the coats. She proceeds deeper into the wardrobe to the second row of coats. Expecting to feel the back of the wardrobe, she instead feels only empty space. She continues walking, and soon feels something crunching beneath her feet. She looks down, and finds she is walking through freshly fallen snow. Lucy soon feels that tree branches rather than coats are rubbing against her face, and eventually emerges into the middle of a snowy wood at nighttime.

Lucy's curiosity leads her somewhere new. Though the children are being sheltered from the chaos of the war, the fact that Lucy stumbles upon a fantasy realm so soon into her stay at the Professor's shows that sometimes chaos and the unknown cannot be avoided.

Lucy is frightened, but excited, too. Behind her, she can see the open door of the wardrobe; knowing that she can always get back if anything should go wrong, she walks through the wood. After walking for a few minutes she comes upon a lamp-post. As she stops to look at it, she hears footsteps coming toward her. Soon, a Faun (later revealed as Mr. Tumnus) emerges from the trees, carrying an umbrella. He wears a scarf and holds presents in his arms, and Lucy thinks he looks as if he has just come back from doing his Christmas shopping. When the Faun catches sight of Lucy, he shouts in surprise, and is so startled that he drops all of his parcels into the snow.

Lucy is in another world—and, clearly, it is a place where strange and mythical creatures exist. In Narnia, a Faun is a creature that is part human and part goat (similar to a centaur). Being ensconced in a fantasy world, though, does not mean that Lucy will be free from conflict and fear. Lewis will toy with the idea of escapism throughout the novel, and will subvert readers' expectations of what it means to enter a magical realm adjacent to the "real" world.

CHAPTER 2: WHAT LUCY FOUND THERE

As the Faun (Mr. Tumnus) scrambles to pick up all his parcels, he asks Lucy if she is a "Daughter of Eve." She replies that her name is Lucy, and the Faun clarifies his question—he wants to know if she is a human girl. Puzzled, Lucy says she is of course human. The Faun is "delighted"; he has never seen a "Son of Adam" or a "Daughter of Eve" before.

The fact that Narnians refer to humans as "Sons of Adam" and "Daughters of Eve" is part of Lewis's Christian allegory—humans are created in God's image (like Adam and Eve from the Book of Genesis) and are thus divine beings in Narnia.

The faun introduces himself to Lucy as Mr. Tumnus, and asks why Lucy has come to Narnia. Lucy asks what Narnia is, and Mr. Tumnus explains Narnia is the name of the realm she has entered into—it stretches from the lamp-post to the "great castle of Cair Paravel on the eastern sea." Lucy tells Mr. Tumnus that she came through the wardrobe in the spare room—Mr. Tumnus says he has never heard of the "far land of Spare Oom" or the "bright city of War Drobe," but warns Lucy they will catch cold if they stay outside talking too much longer. He invites her to come back to his home for some tea and cake, and Lucy accepts his offer.

Mr. Tumnus is clearly ignorant of the existence of the "real" world Lucy comes from. Nevertheless, knowing that she is a Daughter of Eve—and thus holds a special, revered place in the world of Narnia—he wants to help her and provide her with food, comfort, and shelter. This moment also shows Lucy's inquisitive and trusting nature, as she willingly accompanies a strange creature she just met to his home.

Mr. Tumnus leads Lucy to the warm cave where he lives. He boils tea and makes a delicious meal, and while Lucy eats, he regales her with stories of life in the forest, telling her all about fantastic creatures who live in Narnia: Nymphs, Dryads, Dwarves, and even Bacchus himself call the Narnian woods home. Mr. Tumnus plays his flute for Lucy, and soon she realizes that she has been inside his cave for several hours, eating and drinking and being merry. Lucy tells Mr. Tumnus she must return home, but Mr. Tumnus attempts to stop her. Lucy becomes frightened, and insists on leaving. Mr. Tumnus's eyes fill with tears, and he begins sobbing.

Lucy is having a grand time at Mr. Tumnus's house, and believes that they are friends. However, when she asks to leave, the mood in the room changes dramatically, and it becomes clear that something in Narnia—or at least with Mr. Tumnus—is very, very wrong.

Lucy offers Mr. Tumnus a handkerchief and asks what the matter is. He confesses through his tears that he has done a horrible thing and been a "bad Faun." He reveals to Lucy that he is in the service of the White Witch—the despotic ruler of Narnia who has made it "always winter and never Christmas" in the land. Mr. Tumnus works as a kidnapper for the Witch, and vowed that if a human ever entered Narnia, he would capture them on her behalf. Mr. Tumnus admits that he was planning to wait until Lucy fell asleep before running to tell the White Witch he had at last found a Daughter of Eve in the wood.

Mr. Tumnus's confession reveals that he is honest and good to a fault, even when tempted by evil. His tearful confession also shows that Narnia is under siege—and that many of its creatures have already succumbed to the ill-intentioned whims of the powerful White Witch.

Lucy asks Mr. Tumnus to let her go home. He says that he of course will, though if he is found out, the White Witch will inflict horrible punishments upon him, and may even turn him into a statue—he worries he will remain stone "until the four thrones at Cair Paravel are filled," an event that seems as if it will never happen at all. Mr. Tumnus offers to bring Lucy back to the lamp-post, but warns her they must go quietly—the whole wood is full of the Witch's spies.

Mr. Tumnus agrees to help bring Lucy to safety, even though it means that his own well-being may be jeopardized. Moreover, his revelation about the prophecy regarding Cair Paravel seems to portend that Susan, Edmund, and Peter will soon have roles to play in Narnia, as well.

At the lamp-post, Mr. Tumnus apologizes again to Lucy, and asks for her forgiveness. Lucy wishes Mr. Tumnus well and bids him goodbye, returning through the wardrobe. Soon she feels the fur coats surrounding her, and jumps out of the wardrobe and back into the empty room where everything started. It is still raining; she can hear the voices of her siblings in the hall, and she calls to them, announcing that she has returned.

As Lucy tumbles back through the wardrobe, she is disoriented and excited. She has gained wisdom about something her siblings are ignorant of—as the youngest, she is rarely in this position, and she is thrilled about it.

CHAPTER 3: EDMUND AND THE WARDROBE

Lucy runs into the hall and joins her three siblings, reassuring them that everything is all right—she has come back. The others, though, have no idea what she's talking about. Lucy insists she's been away for hours, but her sister Susan informs her that the three of them just left the wardrobe room a moment ago. The others tease Lucy for making up a story for fun. Lucy protests that the wardrobe is magic, and houses an enchanted land called Narnia. The others become excited, and follow Lucy back into the room.

As it becomes clear that Lucy has experienced the events of the last several hours—or minutes—very differently from her siblings, she feels humiliated and ashamed rather than empowered and excited, as she felt just a few moments ago. She is determined to show them the truth of what she has experienced—and, surprisingly, they are willing to believe her at first.

When Lucy opens the wardrobe for her siblings, however, they find that it is an ordinary piece of furniture—Peter climbs into it and raps his knuckles against the back of the wardrobe, proving that it is solid. He congratulates Lucy on a "jolly good hoax," but Lucy again insists she was telling the truth. Peter urges Lucy to drop the charade, and Lucy bursts into tears.

Lucy is devastated to realize that, for some reason, she is unable to prove herself to her siblings—and unable to share the secrets of Narnia with them, either.

For the next few days, Lucy is "miserable." She cannot bring herself to say that Narnia was a lie—she is a "very truthful girl" and knows in her heart that she is right. Peter and Susan tease her lightly about Narnia, but Edmund, who is spiteful and cruel, teases Lucy ruthlessly to the point that she cannot enjoy any of the days' activities: swimming, fishing, climbing trees, and relaxing in the fields.

As the days go by, Peter and Susan tease Lucy like ordinary, well-meaning siblings—but Lewis uses Edmund's more mean-spirited, ruthless taunts to show that he has a darker streak than the rest of his siblings and wants to assert power over the others.

On the next rainy day, the siblings decide to play hide-and-seek inside the house. Susan is "It," and counts while her siblings hide. Lucy returns to the wardrobe room, and decides to have just one more look inside of it to determine for herself whether Narnia was in fact a dream. Lucy climbs into the wardrobe and pulls the door up behind her, but does not shut it all the way. Edmund follows her into the room, and enters just in time to see Lucy climbing into the wardrobe; he decides to follow her in so that he can keep teasing her about her "imaginary country."

As Edmund follows Lucy into the wardrobe, he does so not out of a genuine desire to see the world from her point of view or spend time with her, but instead to spitefully gain ammunition with which he can taunt her further.

Edmund jumps into the wardrobe and feels around for Lucy, but cannot find her. He begins calling for her, and soon finds that he, too, has gone through the wardrobe to a snowy forest. Edmund is surprised to find that Lucy was telling the truth all along. He calls for his sister, apologizing and asking for a truce, but she does not answer. Edmund looks around the wood, and decides he does not like Narnia—he wants to go home. As he turns to leave, though, he hears the sound of bells approaching; soon, a large, marvelous sledge (sleigh) drawn by reindeer and driven by a Dwarf comes into view.

Edmund's mean-spirited pursuit of Lucy upends his expectations as he, too, finds himself plunged into Narnia. Edmund is not as brave as Lucy, and immediately finds that he does not want to stay there—but his curiosity is piqued at the sight of something extraordinary, and reminiscent of Father Christmas's sleigh.

Sitting in the sledge is a "great lady," taller than any woman Edmund has ever seen. She is dressed in white fur and holds a long golden wand. Her face is snow-white, and its features are cold and stern. When the lady sees Edmund, she orders her driver to stop—she leans out of the sledge toward Edmund and asks him "what" he is. Edmund stammers as he introduces himself, and the lady chastises him for speaking so casually to the Queen of Narnia.

Edmund has unknowingly encountered the White Witch—the pretender to the throne of Narnia who has appointed herself Queen. Judging by his past behavior, this exchange will not go well for Edmund; he is driven by dark impulses and easily tempted toward cruelty, making him the perfect pawn for the Witch.

CHAPTER 4: TURKISH DELIGHT

The Queen asks Edmund once again what he is. He answers that he is a boy—the Queen is delighted to have finally encountered a "Son of Adam." She asks Edmund how he came to Narnia, and when he reveals that he came through a wardrobe, the Queen seems both impressed and nervous by Edmund's ability to traverse worlds through a simple door. She worries aloud that Edmund may "wreck all"—but then declares that he is "only one, and […] easily dealt with."

The Queen, beginning to understand who Edmund is, senses that he has a great power, and that he may threaten her claim to the throne. As such, she wishes to dispatch him, and immediately begins devising how she will do so.

The Queen rises from her sledge and begins taking a pitying tone with Edmund. She tells him he looks very cold, and invites him to come sit in the sledge with her, where he can get warm under her blankets. Edmund steps into the sledge and allows himself to be draped in fur. The Queen conjures a drink and a snack for Edmund—she asks him what he would most like to eat in the world, and when he answers "Turkish Delight," she uses her magic to make some appear for him.

The Witch beguiles and seduces Edmund, plying him with enchanted food and drink. By presenting herself as a friend to him, the White Witch uses both emotional and psychological control to place Edmund firmly in her clutches and use him as a pawn in his own destruction.

As Edmund eats the Turkish Delight, the Queen asks him many questions. He answers them all honestly, revealing that he has one brother and two sisters, and that one of his sisters has already been to Narnia and met a Faun (Mr. Tumnus). The Queen is "especially interested" in the fact that there are four siblings, and asks Edmund if he would bring his brother and sisters to her. Edmund has finished the Turkish Delight—the Queen promises that if Edmund does her bidding, she will give him more candy and bring him to her house, where she will make him Prince and eventually King of Narnia.

The Turkish Delight is enchanted, but its power is only part of the reason Edmund is in the Queen's thrall—the idea that he could have power over his siblings, and become King of the world Lucy first discovered, is deeply tempting to him, as he is clearly insecure and conflicted about his role in his own family.

Edmund begs to be brought to the Queen's home now, but she insists he must bring his siblings to her first. The Queen points out where her castle sits in the distance, between two hills; she asks him to return to Narnia with his siblings and bring them to her home. She warns Edmund not to tell his siblings about her, and to make their visit to her castle "a surprise for them." She tells Edmund that if Lucy met a Faun, she has surely heard "nasty stories" about the Queen. Edmund begs for one last piece of Turkish Delight, but the Queen says he must wait until the next time he sees her, and then orders her driver to continue on.

In one final attempt to get Edmund on her side, the Witch uses psychological manipulation to continue turning Edmund against Lucy, undermining their already-fraught relationship, and inspiring further suspicion and discord between them.

After the sledge departs, Edmund hears Lucy calling for him. She is excited to see that he has made it through to Narnia as well, and explains that she was having lunch with her friend Mr. Tumnus, who has thankfully been unbothered by the White Witch. Edmund asks who the White Witch is, and Lucy tells him that the White Witch is a pretender to the throne of Narnia who is hated by all the creatures of the land. Lucy tells Edmund that the Witch has made it "always winter but never Christmas" in the land and drives around in a sledge drawn by reindeer.

From Lucy's description, Edmund can plainly see that the woman he believes to be Queen of Narnia is nothing more than a wretched, evil Witch. He has been duped, but whether he will admit to it and join Lucy or lean into the Witch's temptations remains to be seen.

Edmund is upset to hear that he has made friends with a dangerous witch. He asks who told Lucy about the White Witch—when she reveals it was Mr. Tumnus the Faun who told her, Edmund warns her not to trust what Fauns say, and then suggests the two of them return home. Lucy agrees that they should, and expresses how happy she is that Edmund has seen Narnia, too—now, the others will believe her. Edmund, though, feels nervous about having to admit that Lucy was right in front of all his siblings. As the two of them head back to the lamp-post and through the wardrobe, Lucy observes that Edmund looks unwell; he is feeling very sick indeed from the Turkish Delight.

Edmund is uneasy about the exchange he has just had with the Witch—but the promises she made him seem to outweigh whatever dark feelings he has about being conscripted to her service. Edmund is deeply insecure, and even as he and Lucy head back to their own world, Edmund is uncertain of where his allegiances and sympathies truly lie.

CHAPTER 5: BACK ON THIS SIDE OF THE DOOR

Lucy and Edmund return to find that the game of hide-and-seek is still going on, and so it takes them some time to find their siblings. Lucy, excited, immediately tells the others that Narnia is real, and that Edmund has been there now, too. When Peter asks Edmund if Lucy is telling the truth, Edmund decides "to do the meanest and most spiteful thing he [can] think of," and lies to Peter and Susan, telling them that he and Lucy have simply been playing pretend in the wardrobe. Lucy, hurt, runs from the room to be alone.

Edmund makes a conscious decision to hurt Lucy by denying her the chance to prove that Narnia was real all along. Edmund wants to gain power over his siblings, and sees humiliating Lucy as the surest way to do so as he waits for his chance to secure the ultimate coup-de-grace by bringing them all to the White Witch.

Peter reprimands Edmund for being "beastly" to Lucy and setting her off. Edmund protests that Lucy has been spouting nonsense. Peter replies that he knows it's nonsense, but that Edmund isn't doing Lucy any favors by being cruel to her and jerking her around. Peter accuses Edmund of being cruel to anyone littler than himself, and reminds Edmund of the trouble Edmund was getting up to at school before they left London. Susan tells the boys to stop fighting, and suggests they all go off and find Lucy.

Through Peter's allusions to Edmund's difficulties in school, Lewis demonstrates further the deep internal conflict which must be spurring Edmund to make the wrong decisions at every single turn. Edmund, struggling so hard in the real world, of course wants to buy into the escapist fantasy of the idea that the Queen could one day put him In charge of a whole world.

When they encounter Lucy again, she has clearly been crying. She tells the others that she doesn't care what they think; she is telling the truth about Narnia, and now wishes she had stayed there forever. Peter and Susan are concerned for Lucy, and wonder if she is slightly losing her mind. After discussing the matter, Peter and Susan decide to go to the Professor and tell him what's going on.

Peter and Susan love their little sister, but are disturbed by how emotional she is about what they believe is a pretend game. They do not see that perhaps Lucy has gained a kind of wisdom they can't yet perceive or understand.

The Professor listens thoughtfully to Peter and Susan's story, and then asks them how they know that Lucy isn't telling the truth. Susan tells him that Edmund accused Lucy of lying. The Professor, though, asks Peter and Susan which of their siblings is more reliable: Lucy or Edmund. Peter admits that Lucy is more truthful, and Susan agrees. The Professor warns them that to charge a truthful person with lying is a "very serious thing indeed." Peter and Susan confess that they are worried Lucy has gone mad, but the Professor insists that one can simply look at Lucy and see that she is perfectly sane. Logic, then, says the professor, dictates that if Lucy is not a liar and hasn't gone mad, they all must assume she is telling the truth.

The Professor is an unlikely ally to Lucy, and urges Peter and Susan to be more generous with their younger sister and even go so far as to take her at her world. The Professor's willingness to believe Lucy rather than Peter and Susan—despite not having even talked with Lucy about the matter—seems to imply that his allegiance to the idea that Narnia could be real stems from some deeper place. As the owner of the big, old house, perhaps the Professor has firsthand experience with the magical land hidden inside of the wardrobe.

Susan and Peter are shocked to see that the Professor is serious, but he presses on, encouraging them to question the nature of what is real and unreal. He states that he himself cannot promise that there is not a door to another world hidden somewhere in his "very strange house" which he himself knows little about, and that the discovery of another dimension within it would not exactly surprise him. Peter and Susan as the Professor what they should do about Lucy, and he advises them to try minding their own business; with that, the conversation is over.

The Professor wants the children to admit that perhaps they don't know everything—that there could be whole worlds waiting to be discovered, and endless strains of new wisdom to be gleaned from them.

After their conversation with the Professor, Peter and Susan try hard to make things better for Lucy. Peter gets Edmund to stop teasing her, and no one brings the wardrobe up at all.

Rather than confront the issue further, the siblings all agree to pretend it doesn't exist—this willful ignorance ties in with Lewis's theme of hiding from ugly truths about dire matters such as war.

The Professor's house is old and famous, and many people come from all over England to take a tour of it. Mrs. Macready, the housekeeper, is in charge of leading groups of tourists through the house, telling them all about the rare books and the suits of armor. Mrs. Macready, who does not like children, always warns the four siblings never to interrupt her during these tours, and to make themselves scarce while they are going on. One morning, Peter and Edmund are playing near a suit of armor when Lucy and Susan rush into the room and warn them to get out of the way—Mrs. Macready and a tour group are coming through. The siblings run through the adjoining rooms until they come to the wardrobe room. Desperate to hide, all four squeeze themselves into the wardrobe and shut themselves inside.

The children, all in need of a hiding place, decide on the wardrobe as the best spot despite the tensions it has recently created in their relationship. The theme of hiding from reality and ensconcing oneself in a fantasy world is enacted literally in this passage as the siblings seek refuge—only to find that perhaps they are stumbling into even more trouble.

CHAPTER 6: INTO THE FOREST

The children crouch in the wardrobe, wishing Mrs. Macready would finish up her tour so they could leave. After a while, they begin to smell camphor and feel a chill in the air—Peter complains that he is sitting on something wet, and Susan sees a light in the corner of the wardrobe. Peter realizes that they have "got into Lucy's wood after all." The children all stand up and make their way to the back of the wardrobe; when they realize that they are in Narnia, Peter apologizes to Lucy for not believing her, and suggests they all go exploring. Susan points out that it is cold, and suggests they each take a fur coat from the wardrobe. The children don the oversized coats, which look very much like "royal robes" on them.

The children are at last all in Narnia together, and instantly feel badly about not having believed Lucy. As they don the overcoats and appear as if they are wearing royal robes, it is almost as if their divine fate as Sons of Adam and Daughters of Eve destined to deliver Narnia from evil is already confirmed.

As the children set out, Edmund suggests they head to the left, hoping to point his siblings in the direction of the Queen's home. When Peter realizes that Edmund has been to Narnia before after all, he calls him a "poisonous little beast." Peter, Susan, and Lucy head onward, and Edmund lags behind them, planning on how he will "pay [them] all out" soon enough.

Edmund's attempt to secure his own power and glory is thwarted in favor of Lucy's appointment as guide and leader; this incenses Edmund, and will drive him to even further betrayals not just of Lucy but all his siblings.

Peter suggests Lucy act as the leader, since she is the most familiar with Narnia. Lucy decides to lead the group to Mr. Tumnus's house, but when they arrive, a "terrible surprise" is waiting for them. Mr. Tumnus's cave has been ransacked, and a note taped to the front states that "the Faun Tumnus is under arrest and awaiting his trial on a charge of High Treason" for comforting the Queen's enemies and "fraternizing with Humans." The note is signed by Maugrim, the Captain of the Queen's Secret Police.

Lucy wants to bring her siblings to Mr. Tumnus's house to introduce them to the beautiful, idyllic version of Narnia she thinks is real—but the conflict has gotten so bad that even Mr. Tumnus's house is no longer a safe haven. The discord and evil sown throughout Narnia can no longer be denied, by Lucy or anyone else.

Susan and Peter are frightened, and ask Lucy to explain what's going on. She tells them that the Queen is actually the horrible White Witch who has cursed Narnia to an eternal winter without Christmas. Susan wants to turn back and head home, but Lucy insists that they must help Mr. Tumnus, as it's her own fault that he's been arrested. Edmund, too, worries that if they go on further into Narnia, they'll be unable to help, but Susan and Peter, after further consideration, agree that they must go forward and try to rescue Tumnus.

Susan, Lucy, Peter, and Edmund—who were whisked away from the middle of the gruesome war threatening their "real" world—find themselves thrust into the middle of a war in Narnia. Rather than hide this time, or be pulled away by other forces, the siblings choose to stay and fight, and involve themselves in the struggle, though they do not yet understand its depths or stakes.

Lucy spots a robin on a tree branch, and observes that it seems like it wants to say something to her and her siblings. She wonders aloud if birds can talk in Narnia, and then asks the bird to tell them where Mr. Tumnus has been taken. Rather than answering, the bird begins to hop from tree to tree, and in this way leads the children through the woods. As they follow it, Edmund worries aloud to Peter that the robin is leading them into trouble. Peter says he's sure the Robin wouldn't be on "the wrong side," and Edmund expresses uncertainty as to which side of the conflict in Narnia is the "right side."

As the children journey further into Narnia, they are determined but frightened—even something as benign as a robin seems like it has the potential to harm them or lead them into the heart of danger. Edmund's early difficulty in telling the "right side" from the "wrong side" points to the book's religious underpinnings; as the novel unfolds, Edmund struggles to discern right from wrong and resist sinful temptations.

CHAPTER 7: A DAY WITH THE BEAVERS

After a while, the robin stops leading the children through the wood and flies away. Lucy and Edmund are frightened, worried that they have walked into a trap, but Susan points out something moving in the trees—all the children look more closely and see that it is a whiskered, furry animal. The creature puts its finger to its lips, gesturing for the children to be quiet, and then comes out from behind the tree. It looks around fearfully, tells the children to "Hush," and then retreats back into the trees. Peter says he thinks the creature is a beaver. The children debate whether they should follow it into the brush, and ultimately agree that if worse comes to worst, they will be a "match" for the small animal.

Talking animals are not out of the ordinary in Narnia, but still, the children are wary of the beaver as it attempts to beckon them closer. As with the robin, anything could be a threat—the children are in new territory, and do not yet know whom they can and cannot trust. Little do they know, the person they should be most wary of is one of their own: Edmund.

The children head deeper into the trees, and the beaver keeps beckoning them closer; "We're not safe in the open," he says. Finally, the children and the beaver arrive at a small clearing, and the beaver asks them if they are "the Sons of Adam and the Daughters of Eve." Peter confirms that they are, and asks who the beaver is so afraid of. The beaver explains that the trees are always listening—and some of them are loyal to the Queen.

The beaver, too, is wary of his surroundings—this demonstrates that the children were right to be suspicious of both the beaver and the robin, as Narnia is clearly a deeply divided realm marred by distrust and discord.

Edmund suspiciously asks how they can know the beaver is on their side, and the beaver holds up a little white cloth—Lucy recognizes it as the handkerchief she gave to Mr. Tumnus. The beaver reveals that Mr. Tumnus got wind of his own arrest before it happened, and instructed the beaver to meet the children when they returned to Narnia. Before continuing with his tale, the beavery beckons the children even closer so that he can whisper to them; once they are close enough, he tells them that "Aslan is on the move."

The beaver is on the "right" side, and in fact has been placed in charge of shuttling the children to safety by Mr. Tumnus himself. The beaver mentions the name Aslan as if the children should already know what it signifies—revealing that whoever Aslan is, he is powerful, and may perhaps even stand to save Narnia.

At the mention of the name Aslan, though they do not yet know who he is, the children all feel "quite different." Edmund feels a mysterious horror; Peter feels full of bravery; Susan feels as if she has just smelled something delicious or heard beautiful music; Lucy feels excited, as if it is the morning of a holiday.

The name of Aslan—though the children are ignorant of who he is or what he stands for—is a tremendous force, almost a physical entity. Lewis includes this scene to allegorize the feelings of joy, serenity, or indeed even fear that even the name Jesus Christ inspires in believers and nonbelievers alike.

Lucy asks where Mr. Tumnus has gone, but the beaver insists that before they discuss any more he must bring them somewhere safe, where they can all have a "real talk" and some dinner. The children hurry along after the beaver as he leads them on an hour's trek through the woods. Eventually, their group comes to a frozen river where the beaver has built a dam. Upriver, Edmund can see the twin hills which flank the Queen's castle. "Horrible ideas" come into his head as he schemes about how to get to her, to secure more Turkish Delight for himself.

The children, who now know they can trust the beaver, agree to follow him through Narnia. Edmund, however, wishes he could strike off on his own and follow through with his "horrible" plans for how to serve his own desires and undermine his siblings' involvement in the war against the Witch.

Mr. Beaver leads the children into his home, where his wife, Mrs. Beaver, is waiting for them all. She is excited to meet the Sons of Adam and the Daughters of Eve. Mrs. Beaver boils potatoes and sets the table with Lucy and Susan's help, while Mr. Beaver and Peter go out to catch some fish for dinner. The whole group then sits around the table and enjoys a delicious meal, complete with dessert and tea. Mr. Beaver lights his pipe, looks out the window, and observes that it has begun to snow; he is grateful for the weather, as it will disguise the tracks they left through the woods on their way to the dam.

The children are once again safe and warm in the care of kind Narnians. The atmosphere of danger and distrust abates in the Beavers' dam, and the children settle in; as the snow falls, their fears of being followed subside, and they allow themselves to enjoy Narnia for the first time since their arrival.

CHAPTER 8: WHAT HAPPENED AFTER DINNER

The children begin to ask Mr. Beaver where Mr. Tumnus has been taken, and what will become of him. Mr. Beaver explains that Tumnus has been taken to the Witch's house. Lucy asks what will happen to him there, and Mr. Beaver predicts that he will be turned to stone—rumor has it that the Witch turns all her enemies into statues and keeps them in a vast courtyard. Lucy asks if there is anything they can do to save Tumnus, but Mr. Beaver insists there is no way for anyone to get into Witch's house against her will and come back out alive. The best thing they can do, he says, is wait for Aslan to arrive.

The Beavers oppose the Witch ideologically, but know that she is too powerful to be stopped by anyone but Aslan. This explains why the Witch has ruled for so long, and been able to exert such total control over Narnia even though she's not its true ruler.

Susan asks who Aslan is, and Mr. Beaver explains that Aslan is the King—the Lord of the whole wood. Though Aslan is very powerful, he is not often in Narnia, and has never been present here in Mr. Beaver's lifetime, or even that of his father's. Aslan has returned, though, and Mr. Beaver knows that Aslan will "settle" the White Witch and save Mr. Tumnus. Edmund suggests the White Witch will turn Aslan into stone, but Mr. Beaver finds this idea laughable—Aslan is so powerful that he cannot be challenged by anyone, even the Queen. Mr. Beaver mentions an old prophecy which predicts that "winter [will] meet its death" and sorrow will end when Aslan returns to Narnia to bring spring again.

Aslan—like Jesus Christ—is powerful but rarely seen, an entity who inspires great loyalty and awe despite the fact that he is not physically present in the lives of his followers. Mr. Beaver's belief in the absolute power of Aslan over the Witch mirrors many faithful adherents of Christianity's belief in the absolute power of Christ to heal and deliver those in need of him.

Mr. Beaver tells the children they'll understand Aslan's power when they finally meet him. Lucy asks if Aslan is a man—Mr. Beaver reveals that Aslan is a great lion. The children are nervous about meeting a lion, but excited. Mr. Beaver announces that he has received word that the children will meet Aslan tomorrow at the Stone Table, which is down the river "a good step" from the dam. Mr. Beaver himself will bring the children there—once they meet up with Aslan, they will be able to challenge the Queen. He cites another prophecy which predicts that "when Adam's flesh and Adam's bone" ascend the throne at Cair Paravel, evil will be gone from Narnia.

The prophecy about the ascendance of a human—or humans—to the throne at Cair Paravel cements the fact that the children have more power than they originally thought. They are firmly at the center of the battle for Narnia, according to the prophecy, and as such will no doubt be called upon to stand up and fight when the time comes.

Mr. Beaver explains that the Witch has tried to disguise herself as a human to make it seem as if she is the prophesized ruler of Narnia. In reality, though, the Witch knows that there are four thrones at Cair Paravel—the prophecy states that two Sons of Adam and two Daughters of Eve will one day sit upon them, and the reign of humans will be the end of the White Witch's life. This, Mr. Beaver says, is why he had to take them through the woods so carefully—if the Witch knew they had come to Narnia, she would surely be hunting them.

This revelation serves to show why the Witch is so bent on the children's destruction—they pose a direct threat to the despotic reign she has toiled for years to secure for herself. The children, made "divinely" in God's image, are the one true threat the Witch's evil and corruption.

Lucy suddenly realizes that Edmund is not sitting at the table. The group looks about frantically for him, but no one remembers seeing him slip out. They all go out into the snow and call for him, but Edmund is long gone. Peter suggests they split up into search parties, but Mr. Beaver protests that there is no point in looking for Edmund—he has betrayed them all, and gone to the house of the Witch. Lucy realizes with chagrin that Edmund has been to Narnia before, though he did not tell her what he did here or who he met—Mr. Beaver knew, though, from the moment he laid eyes on Edmund, that the boy was "treacherous," and had the look of someone who had met with the look and eaten her enchanted food.

Mr. Beaver has known all along that Edmund is far more troubled than he lets on. Mr. Beaver laments that Edmund was taken in by the Witch's enchantments, but also implies that once Edmund had consumed the Witch's food, none of them ever stood a chance. This implies that at least part of Edmund's conflict—and indeed his betrayal—is beyond his own control, though his inherent desire to gain power over his siblings still stands.

Mr. Beaver tells the children that their only chance now is Aslan, and suggests they get on their way to the Stone Table. Mrs. Beaver realizes, though, that Edmund will surely bring the information about the meeting with Aslan at the Stone Table to the Witch, and Mr. Beaver worries that she will attempt to cut them off from Aslan by intercepting them before they reach the landmark. Mrs. Beaver predicts that the Witch will come to the beaver dam first, though; Mr. Beaver agrees, and tells the children it is time to hurry away.

The Beavers, having greater knowledge of Narnia and its conflicts, are able to advise the children as to what to do to remain safely hidden from the Witch's clutches. They do not trust Edmund, and begin preparing for the worst-case scenario—his shameless betrayal of all their secrets.

CHAPTER 9: IN THE WITCH'S HOUSE

The narrative fills in the blanks as to what happened to Edmund during dinner. As the others ate their delicious food, Edmund found that he could only think of the Witch's Turkish Delight—the enchanted food had ruined his taste for ordinary food. After hearing about Aslan and the Stone Table, Edmund slipped away from the dinner table, feeling the same "mysterious and horrible" sensation he felt the first time he ever heard Aslan's name. Edmund let himself out into the snow and began to head for the Witch's house.

Edmund, having tasted the Witch's enchanted food and heard her lofty promises, has no patience for either "regular" food or the fantastical tales about Aslan and Cair Paravel. Edmund is deeply unsettled, and is lashing out and acting against his own best interests in search of regaining some control over his own life.

Edmund does not want his brother and sisters to be turned to stone, but all he can focus on his desire for more Turkish Delight, and to one day be a Prince, or even a King. He also wants to pay Peter back for being mean to him and calling him a beast. Edmund believes that if he delivers his brother and sisters to the Witch, she will make them royalty in Narnia as well—the Queen was "jolly nice" to Edmund, and he cannot believe that she is as bad as Mr. Beaver and Mrs. Beaver say she is. Edmund tells himself this over and over as he heads through the snow, but deep down, he knows that he is lying to himself.

Edmund is revealed to be motivated more out of selfishness than spite, after all. He wants to gain power over his siblings, certainly, but actually just wants to experience luxury and indulgence for himself. He is so desperate to regain these feelings of control that he purposefully scrambles his own moral compass and lies to himself about what is right and wrong.

Edmund travels through the snow, slipping on drifts and skidding on ice. Wet, cold, bruised, and tired, Edmund comforts himself during the difficult journey by imagining all the things he will do once he is King of Narnia. At last, he reaches the Witch's house, which is a small castle with long, pointy spires all around it. The house is imposing, and Edmund is afraid, but he knows it is too late to turn back now. He finds his way into the courtyard, and sees the many stone animals there—there is even a stone lion, and Edmund believes that the Witch has already caught Aslan and turned him to stone. Edmund takes a bit of lead from his pocket and draws a mustache on the lion, defacing it, but right away feels badly about his cruel mischief.

Edmund's struggle against the snowy, bitter cold is symbolic of the literal winter of the soul he is experiencing. Edmund is in deep denial about his own choices and their consequences, and as such is made to suffer the brutal chill of the Witch's winter even more acutely. When Edmund defaces the lion, he does so in an attempt to feel good about himself again—but the act of vandalism only leaves him realizing that he is unable to ever truly quash the inner voice inside that knows right from wrong.

Edmund continues through the courtyard and comes upon a great wolf at the threshold to the palace. Edmund tells himself not to be afraid, as the wolf is made of stone, but then it rises up and speaks to him. Edmund tells the wolf his name, and tells him that his brother and sisters are at Mr. Beaver's house. The wolf goes inside to deliver the message, and Edmund realizes the wolf must be Maugrim, Chief of the Secret Police for the White Witch.

Edmund encounters the terrifying Maugrim, one of the Witch's most trusted companions, and gets an even bigger glimpse of what life at her castle is really like—there is terror around every corner, and it is not the fantastical, jolly place filled with Turkish Delight that he was promised.

Maugrim returns and admits Edmund into the hall. The palace, too, is full of stone statues of the Witch's enemies. Maugrim leads Edmund to the White Witch—she is incensed that he has come without his siblings. Edmund assures her that the others are quite close, dining in the house of Mr. Beaver and Mrs. Beaver. This seems to please the Witch, and she asks Edmund if he has any more news. He tells her that Aslan is approaching—the Queen, frightened, immediately orders her driver to ready the sledge, and to tie up the reindeers using the harness without bells.

Edmund's news for the Witch at first seems to excite her—but then, once he announces that Aslan is near, the Witch grows terrified, distraught, and manic, desperate to escape her castle and travel through Narnia incognito, as evidenced by her request to keep her sledge free of jingling bells.

CHAPTER 10: THE SPELL BEGINS TO BREAK

Back at the Mr. Beaver and Mrs. Beaver's house, Peter, Susan, and Lucy hurriedly gather food and supplies for the journey. They want to leave now and get a head start—they doubt they can beat the Witch to the Stone Table, but know that by taking sneaky ways through the woods, they can avoid a confrontation. As the children and the Beavers walk through the wood, Lucy grows increasingly tired beneath her heavy load. After several hours, the Beavers burrow into a small cave for some rest, and invite the children to do the same. Mrs. Beaver gives everyone a bit of whiskey, and soon they all fall asleep.

The Beavers want the children to be safe and even comfortable despite the chaos, fear, and discord all around them. They are helpful and nurturing guides through the harsh and confusing world of Narnia, and are allegiant to the children to the point of risking their own safety and well-being to ensure that of Peter, Susan, and Lucy.

In the morning, the group awakes to the sound of jingling bells. Mr. Beaver heads out to investigate, worried that the Witch has arrived in her sledge. Once above ground, though, he cries out in delight for everyone to come outside. At the mouth of the cave there is a sledge pulled by reindeer—it is not the Witch's sledge, though, but that of Father Christmas. He rejoices that he has at last gotten into Narnia—the Witch's magic, he says, is weakening now that Aslan is on the move.

Father Christmas's return is a joyous event for the denizens of Narnia, who have not seen Christmas in some time, due to the Witch's commitment to ensuring that it is "always winter, but never Christmas." Father Christmas's arrival signals that the Witch's power is waning, and that her despotic reign may finally be coming to an end.

Father Christmas delivers presents to the Beavers—he has a sewing machine for Mrs. Beaver, and he tells Mr. Beaver that when he returns home he will find his dam finished and repaired. Father Christmas turns to the children and presents them with their presents, which are tools, he says, not toys. For Peter, he has a shield and a sword; for Susan, a bow and a quiver of arrows along with a little ivory horn; for Lucy, a diamond bottle of restorative cordial and a small dagger. Father Christmas warns them that they will all need to use their new tools in the battle to come. Before leaving, Father Christmas gives them all tea and biscuits, bids them all a Merry Christmas, and calls out "Long live the true King!"

Father Christmas symbolizes the bounty Christianity provides—not in terms of material gain, but in terms of accruing "tools" to help one move through the world. As he bestows these gifts upon Susan, Lucy, and Peter, it becomes clear that the three of them will have a significant role to play in the upcoming battle—a battle that will determine the fate of the realm and whether the Witch's bleak winter or Aslan's joyous spring will ultimately win out.

CHAPTER 11: ASLAN IS NEARER

Meanwhile, Edmund, back at the Witch's house, asks for more Turkish Delight as she readies her sledge. She tells him to be silent, and then orders one of her servants to bring Edmund some bread and water. Edmund says he does not want stale, dry bread, but when the Witch gives him a withering look, he eats it anyway.

Edmund is realizing—too late—that the Witch is truly evil, has no interest in his well-being, and is not going to make good on any of the lavish promises she made to him.

Soon, the sledge is ready—the Witch orders Edmund to follow her out to the courtyard. There, they get into the sledge. The Witch tells Maugrim to take his fastest wolves and go to the house of Mr. Beaver and Mrs. Beaver—she orders them to "kill whatever [they] find there," and make haste towards the Stone Table if their home is empty. The wolves take off, and soon the Witch, Edmund, and their driver are off on their own. Edmund is cold, wet, and miserable, and worst of all, he realizes that the Witch does not plan to actually make him a King, or even a Prince.

The Witch is out for blood—she wants to kill anyone who stands in her way, and prevent any challenge to her claim to the throne. Edmund's increasing misery in the cold is symbolic of his punishment for having sold out his siblings for the Witch, and conspired in her evil plot.

After several hours' journey, the sledge comes upon a little outdoor dinner party attended by a family of squirrels, two Satyrs, a Dwarf and a fox. The Witch asks what they are celebrating, and how they got their hands on such delicious food; the fox timidly answers that Father Christmas gave it to them. The Witch, furious, turns all of the animals—and their pudding—to stone.

The Witch knows that Father Christmas's reappearance is a direct threat to her reign. Out of rage and fury, she turns those who have been visited by him (and, symbolically, the bounty of Christianity) into stone, thereby reasserting her power.

The Witch orders her driver to press on, but as the sledge moves over the land, the temperature rises and the sleigh begins to slow down. The snow is melting, and the sledge becomes stuck in mud and slush. Edmund hears the sound of running water in a nearby stream and birds chirping—his heart leaps as he realizes that spring is near.

The melting of the snow is symbolic of the fact that the Witch's reign is, minute by minute, rapidly nearing its end. Edmund, who had once longed to join the Witch in her castle and be a Prince, surprisingly feels joy at the thought of spring—and consequently the Witch's fall from power.

The Witch orders Edmund to get out of the sledge and help unstick it from the mud. After doing so, the Witch orders her driver to carry on, but he protests that they can't possibly make headway in such sludge and much. The Witch decides that their group will walk—she orders her driver to tie Edmund's hands, and the three of them trudge on through the melting world as it gives way to green trees, flowers, and the chattering of birds. The Witch's driver laments that this sudden coming of spring is "Aslan's doing," but the Witch warns him—and Edmund—that if either of them speaks Aslan's name again, she will kill them on the spot.

The Witch knows that the reason for the warming weather and the reappearance of Father Christmas is the fact that Aslan is approaching. She clearly hates and deeply fears him, but is in denial about the fact that his arrival will mean her end—she presses on even in the face of certain defeat.

CHAPTER 12: PETER'S FIRST BATTLE

Miles away, the Mr. Beaver, Mrs. Beaver, Peter, Lucy, and Susan are still making their way to the Stone Table; they, too, are surprised and delighted by the sudden onset of spring, and realize that the thaw must mean that the Witch's powers are diminishing as Aslan approaches.

The Witch's eternal winter is dissolving before everyone's eyes; her powers have no hold on the realm once the true King approaches. On an allegorical level, Lewis is illustrating Christ's redemptive power even in the face of terrible evil.

At last, the group reaches the clearing where the Stone Table is. Peter, Susan, and Lucy take in the sight of the landmark—it is a huge slab of grey stone inlaid with ancient lines, figures, and markings. A pavilion has been set up on the far side of the clearing, and a banner bearing a red lion flies above it. The children hear the sound of music to their right and turn to face it; they see Aslan in the center of a crowd of creatures which includes Dryads, Naiads, unicorns, and various talking animals. Aslan is large, mighty, and terrible, and the children are afraid to approach him; Mr. Beaver, though, urges them forward.

The children come face-to-face with Aslan for the first time, and are instantly amazed by his power and intimidating presence—as well as the dedicated followers and adherents who have joined him at his camp to prepare for the fight against the Witch.

Peter bravely approaches Aslan, and Aslan greets Peter, Susan, Lucy, Mr. Beaver and Mrs. Beaver warmly. His voice has a calming effect. Aslan asks where the fourth child is; Mr. Beaver answers that Edmund has betrayed them all to the White Witch. Lucy asks Aslan if there is anything he can do to save Edmund; Aslan vows to try, but warns the children it may be harder to save their brother than they think. Lucy notices a sad look cross Aslan's face, but the next moment, the lion pulls himself together and invites the children to come to a great feast.

Though Aslan is powerful and mighty, and the undisputed King of Narnia, there is a sadness and uncertainty within him. Just as Christ was a man, and had to face earthly tribulations, so too does Aslan face pain, adversity, and, if not literal humanity, a reckoning with the limits of his power.

While Lucy and Susan are whisked away to be prepared for dinner, Aslan brings Peter to a high ridge where he can see the country he will soon rule. Aslan points out the great edifice of Cair Paravel, the castle where the children's thrones are housed, and tells Peter that as the eldest of all his siblings, he will be High King of Narnia. Peter and Aslan then hear the sound of a horn—Peter recognizes it as the horn Father Christmas gave to Susan. Realizing she must be in trouble, Aslan and Peter quickly return to the clearing.

Aslan's special interest in Peter, who is the eldest of the four siblings, demonstrates that Aslan knows he is asking a lot of all the children in bringing them to the throne of Narnia—but most of all Peter, who will have to lead. This foreshadows the challenge Peter is about to face immediately as he hears his sister's calls for help.

Chaos has broken out at the Stone Table, and members of Aslan's army are scattered in every direction. Lucy runs towards Peter with fear; Susan is being chased up a tree by Maugrim. Peter draws his sword, rushes straight up to the beast, and plunges his blade into its heart. Though his fight with the wolf was brief, Peter is exhausted and sweating. Susan comes down from the tree and embraces her siblings, but there is no time for rejoicing; Aslan has spotted another wolf darting off into the woods. Aslan tells Peter, Susan, and Lucy that the wolf will be heading off to find the Witch; he implores them to follow the wolf, and rescue Edmund.

Peter's defeat of Maugrim, though swift and seemingly simple, has taxed him greatly. Peter has just gotten his first taste of what it means to be a leader and a protector; he has saved the life of his sister, but must reckon with the fear and responsibility of campaigning against evil and maintaining the peace of the realm.

First, though, Aslan beckons Peter to him. He instructs Peter to wipe his sword clean of the wolf's blood. Once Peter has done so, Aslan asks Peter to hand him the blade. Aslan knights Peter, and dubs him "Sir Peter Wolf's-Bane." As he sends Peter off into the woods, Aslan reminds him to "never forget to wipe [his] sword."

Aslan recognizes Peter's bravery, and warns him to always wipe his sword. This is symbolic of his desire to impress upon Peter the importance of always confronting one's actions and taking responsibility for them.

CHAPTER 13: DEEP MAGIC FROM THE DAWN OF TIME

Edmund, meanwhile, is still in the company of the White Witch. The Witch, Edmund, and her driver the Dwarf have been walking for many hours, and have finally stopped to rest. Edmund lies face-down in the dirt, too hungry, thirsty, and tired to move. He hears the Witch and the Dwarf discussing plans for how to move forward. The Witch wonders aloud about what will happen if only three thrones at Cair Paravel were to be filled. The Witch and the Dwarf decide to keep Edmund as a hostage to bargain with Aslan and his forces. The Witch jeeringly states that Aslan will be forced to "rescue" Edmund, and makes reference to a ritual that must be done on the Stone Table.

The Witch knows that her power, in the wake of Aslan's return, is in serious jeopardy. She conspires as to how she can hang onto what little she has left, and decides to use Edmund as a pawn in in her scheme to strip Aslan of his power and keep the throne to herself.

A wolf approaches the Witch and informs her that Aslan and the three humans are at the Stone Table; Maugrim, he says, has been killed. The Witch orders the wolf to summon as many of her forces as he can—Ghouls, Giants, Werewolves, Ogres, Minotaurs, and more terrible creatures. The wolf goes off to do the Witch's bidding.

The Witch is ready to enter into battle and avenge her trusted police captain Maugrim, and calls all of her loyal followers—evil, dark creatures—to her side.

The Witch and the Dwarf force Edmund roughly to his feet and bind him against a tree. The Dwarf pulls Edmund's shirt away from his neck, exposing his throat. The Witch sharpens her knife using magic. At that moment, confusion descends all around—Edmund hears the Witch screaming and feels strong arms pulling him away from the tree. Edmund, overwhelmed, faints on the spot.

The Witch prepares to kill Edmund, but Aslan's forces come to his rescue. Though Edmund is a traitor, his life is still valuable, and as he is rescued he is given another chance to choose the right side.

The rescue party brings Edmund back to the Stone Table, but in the confusion, have lost the Witch and the Dwarf—the Witch has transfigured herself and her driver into a stump and a boulder, and has managed to keep her precious magic wand intact.

The Witch is still powerful in some ways, but she shows herself to be a coward rather than a righteous warrior by hiding in plain sight.

In the morning, Peter, Susan, and Lucy awake to the news that Edmund has been brought back to camp in the middle of the night, and is presently conversing with Aslan. The children eat breakfast and then go out to find Edmund—Aslan is with him, and tells the others that there is no need to talk with him "about what is past," meaning his tenure in service to the Witch. Edmund apologizes to all of his siblings, and they forgive him.

Though Edmund nor Aslan tells the others what the two of them have discussed in the wake of Edmund's return, it becomes clear that Edmund is forgiven and welcomed back into the fold. Christ preached forgiveness and tolerance, and Aslan exhibits both of these things in his treatment of Edmund.

A leopard approaches Aslan and tells him that a messenger from the "enemy" wants an audience with him. The leopard retreats, and then returns with the Witch's driver. He informs Aslan that the Witch wants to come speak with him, and to be assured of safe conduct during the meeting. Aslan agrees to grant the Witch safe conduct on the condition that she leaves her wand behind in the forest. The Dwarf agrees to this, and two leopards accompany him back to the forest to retrieve the Witch.

Aslan reveals, in requesting that the Witch leave her wand behind, that he is not invincible—he can be killed or defeated, and in this way, is similar to Christ, who was holy but not invulnerable.

A few minutes later, the Witch walks into camp and stands before Aslan. The spring air suddenly grows cold. The Witch informs Aslan that he has a traitor in his possession—Edmund. She chastises Aslan for having forgotten the "Deep Magic" written on the Stone Table, which dictates that the Witch owns every traitor as her "lawful prey," and for every act of treachery has the right to kill its perpetrator. Edmund's blood, she says, is her property. Furthermore, she reminds Aslan that unless she has that blood, the Law says "all Narnia will be overturned and perish in fire and water." Aslan does not deny the truth of the Witch's statements, and admits that he cannot work against this Deep Magic put in place by the Emperor of Narnia.

The air growing cold foreshadows that the Witch is still, against all odds, able to hold on and even exercise some of her evil power even in Aslan's presence. She taunts Aslan with a reminder of what her role in Narnia is, and the fact that Edmund is rightfully hers according to old laws that Aslan himself cannot even begin to challenge.

Aslan instructs the children and his other attendants to fall back and let him talk to the Witch alone. All of them obey, though as they watch the Lion and the Witch talk together, they are anxious and frightened. At last, Aslan calls out for them to come back; he has settled the dispute, and the Witch has renounced her claim on Edmund's blood. Everyone breathes a sigh of relief. The Witch asks Aslan to guarantee that his promise to her will be kept—Aslan roars at her, and the Witch picks up her skirts and runs "for her life" back into the forest.

The Witch and Aslan talk for a while, and clearly strike some kind of bargain. When the Witch attempts to bring the terms of their deal up in front of others, though, Aslan becomes enraged. His roar frightens the Witch off—demonstrating that for all her bravado and flaunting of the Deep Magic of Narnia, she would truly be no match for Aslan if not for the protection of some ancient laws.

CHAPTER 14: THE TRIUMPH OF THE WITCH

As soon as the Witch leaves, Aslan tells everyone that it is time to move away from the Stone Table—it will soon "be wanted for other purposes." Aslan's attendants begin taking the pavilion apart and packing up, and by the afternoon, they are on the march northeast. Aslan warns Peter that after the Witch has "finished her business" at the table, she will return to her palace and prepare for a siege. He instructs Peter in a few different plans of battle—Peter points out that Aslan will be there himself to lead the charge, but Aslan tells Peter that he cannot promise that to him.

Aslan seems to be preparing Peter to take over his command, signaling that something is terribly wrong. No one knows what Aslan and the Witch discussed, but clearly Aslan is worried about his own fate and his ability to successfully lead his army against the Witch.

As they reach their new encampment and begin to unpack, Susan and Lucy notice how sad Aslan looks. Indeed, as the camp comes together, Aslan's poor mood begins affecting everyone, and that evening, supper is a quiet, solemn meal. After dinner, Susan and Lucy lie in bed tossing and turning; neither can sleep. Lucy confesses that she has feeling as if something horrible is hanging over her, and Susan admits to feeling the same. They are both worried that something dreadful is going to happen to Aslan, and decide to go out and look for him.

The meal Aslan and his army enjoy together is reminiscent of the Last Supper—Jesus Christ's last meal with his disciples the night before his Crucifixion. Susan and Lucy have a bad feeling about things—they are emotionally intuitive in a way their brothers are not, and have a special kind of wisdom which allows them to relate to Aslan in a different way.

Susan and Lucy creep out of their tent and see Aslan walking away into the wood. They decide to follow him, and are surprised when they find themselves tracking him down the exact route they took earlier away from the Stone Table. The girls think that Aslan looks tired and weak. Eventually, Aslan turns around and sees them—he asks why they are following him, and the girls tell him they could not sleep. They ask if they can continue accompanying him, and Aslan admits he would be grateful for their company. They can come, he says, but only if they promise to stop when he tells them to, and let him go on alone.

Though Aslan is an imposing and intimidating figure, revered as the powerful King of Narnia, he is humble and weak in this moment. He is grateful for Susan and Lucy's company—they can offer him a kind of comfort and support nothing else can, demonstrating their unique emotional warmth and wisdom.

Susan and Lucy beg Aslan to tell them what's the matter; he replies only that he is sad and lonely. At the top of the hill where the Stone Table sits, Aslan instructs the girls to stop following him and keep themselves from being seen. The girls cry bitterly, knowing that something terrible is about to happen, but agree to let Aslan go on alone.

Though Susan and Lucy know something is wrong, they also know that if Aslan is powerless to stop whatever is coming, they are, too. They let him go on alone, but do not abandon him, and stick around to bear witness to whatever happens to him rather than hide from it.

Susan and Lucy hide in the bushes and watch as Aslan approaches a great crowd standing around the Stone Table. It is a crowd of the Witch's army—Ogres, wolves, spirits of evil trees, Incubuses, Wraiths, and other terrible creatures. The Witch is in the center of them all, standing by the table. Seeing Aslan, she announces that "the fool has come," and orders her henchmen to bind him up fast. Susan and Lucy look on in horror as the evil creatures bind Aslan tightly, shave his mane, and beat him, taunting him for being a "Poor Pussy" and nothing but an overlarge cat. The abuse worsens, and the creatures muzzle Aslan, spit on him, and kick him.

This scene mirrors the Passion of the Christ. Aslan, who is willingly sacrificing himself to the Witch in order to deliver Edmund's sins, is dragged through a crowd of his enemies and is beaten, taunted, and humiliated. Though Lewis surely wants to inspire tension in his readers, if they know the story of Christ, they know that even if Aslan meets with death, it may not be his end.

At last, the Witch's minions drag Aslan up onto the Stone Table. The Witch sharpens her knife, and then approaches Aslan. She gloats about how she has beat him at last—his death will be in vain, as once he is dead, no one will be able to stop her from killing Edmund. The Witch tells Aslan that he has given her Narnia forever; she wants him to "despair" in that knowledge before he dies. Susan and Lucy look away, unable to bear watching as Aslan is killed.

It seems that the Witch has triumphed over Aslan, and indeed all of Narnia. The Witch wants to debase Aslan as deeply as possible before finally killing him, as Christ's enemies wanted to do to him.

CHAPTER 15: DEEPER MAGIC FROM BEFORE THE DAWN OF TIME

Lucy and Susan hear the Witch calling out to her minions to follow her as she tracks down and crushes "the human vermin" and all the traitors who sided with Aslan, who now lies dead on the Stone Table. Once they are gone, the girls creep out onto the hilltop and approach the table. They kneel in the grass and kiss Aslan's face. They cry over his corpse, and, troubled by the horrible way he has been bound and muzzled, try to remove his binds.

Susan and Lucy's mourning of Aslan, and their attempts to dignify his body, mirror the Virgin and Mary Magdalene's attendance of Christ's body during and after his Crucifixion.

The sky begins to lighten, and Susan and Lucy, freezing cold, walk to the edge of the hill. As dawn rises around them, they hear an enormous crack—they turn to look at the table, and find that it has cracked from end to end; Aslan's body is gone. The girls begin to cry, fearing that the Witch's minions returned for it so that they could desecrate it even further, but then they hear Aslan's voice behind them.

Aslan is resurrected, just as Christ was in the wake of his Crucifixion. The cracking of the Stone Table seems to indicate that the Witch's magic—and indeed all of Narnia's magic—is irrelevant in the face of genuine, selfless sacrifice.

Aslan has been restored to life—his mane has grown back, and he looks stronger than ever. Susan and Lucy are amazed to see Aslan resurrected; they run to him and cover him in kisses. Susan asks how he came back, and Aslan reveals that he is alive due to a magic deeper than the kind even the Witch knows—when a willing victim who has committed no treachery is killed in a traitor's stead, the Table cracks, and Death itself begins working backward.

Aslan reveals that though the Witch attempted to use Narnia's magic against him, he actually knew of a deeper magic. He undertook his sacrifice on Edmund's behalf knowing that there was the potential for his resurrection—Aslan would never have abandoned his people, just as Christ knew in sacrificing himself he was not abandoning his.

Aslan rejoices in having regained his strength, and begins running and leaping around the hill. Susan and Lucy romp with him. Aslan warns the girls that he is going to roar, and advises them to plug their ears. They do so, and he lets out a terrible, triumphant cry. Aslan tells the girls to climb up on his back, and then begins running through the forest. After several hours' ride, Aslan, Susan, and Lucy find themselves at the hill above the Witch's home. Aslan leaps down the mountainside and glides over the castle wall. Susan and Lucy tumble off his back and find themselves in a wide courtyard full of statues.

Aslan is stronger than ever, because he has made the ultimate sacrifice and been brought back on the other side. Rejuvenated and ready to take on the Witch, he invites Susan and Lucy to join him as he prepares to enter into battle with her, demonstrating that they are a vital part of his success and equal comrades in the fight for Narnia's soul.

CHAPTER 16: WHAT HAPPENED ABOUT THE STATUES

As Susan and Lucy marvel at the statues, Aslan goes around the courtyard breathing on each one. Slowly, the statues begin coming back to life. The girls are shocked and awestruck as the courtyard fills with animals, Satyrs, and Dwarves. Aslan even releases a fearsome Giant from his stone prison—when he awakes, he is confused as to where he is and what has happened to him, and Susan, Lucy, and Aslan explain. Aslan rounds all of the freed animals and creatures up and urges them to advance into the castle and gather up all the statues inside so that he can free each one of them.

Aslan restores the statues to life and undoes the Witch's evil magic with his breath. This is symbolic of the ways in which Christ himself is often said to restore his followers who eat of his body and drink of his blood through the ritual of communion—Aslan is healing others and delivering them from a static state of dormancy, literally bringing them back to life and renewing them. This moment also parallels the Harrowing of Hell, when Jesus descended into Hell just before his Resurrection and saved all the righteous souls that had been trapped there.

Lucy finds Mr. Tumnus, and Aslan breathes on him and restores him to life; Lucy and Tumnus rejoice at being reunited, and dance around with joy. Soon, there is not a statue left in the whole fortress, and all of the Witch's former prisoners head out into the courtyard. Aslan asks the Giant to blow down the wall which encircles it, and the Giant obliges.

Aslan, having restored all of the Witch's victims, now rallies them around him. He has saved them, and now they are eager to dedicate themselves to him and follow his commands.

Aslan then claps his paws together and calls for silence; he tells his followers that they must march into battle and defeat the Witch before resting. He instructs everyone to help one another on the journey, and asks for the strong to carry the weak. When they are all ready, they set out beyond the castle walls, back toward the encampment beyond the Stone Table.

Aslan does not ask his followers to fight for him—he asks them, rather, to support one another as they head into battle for goodness, for their country, and for all their souls.

Eventually, Aslan and his followers come upon Peter, Edmund, and the rest of their army in a direct clash with the Witch and her horrible minions. Peter's army seems to be flailing, overwhelmed by the terrible creatures loyal to the Witch. The Witch herself is fighting Peter with her stone knife. Aslan orders Susan and Lucy off his back; with a roar, he throws himself into battle and pounces upon the Witch. All of the creatures he freed from her courtyard throw themselves into the fray, as well, and the woods echo with the sounds of screams, cheers, and clashing weapons.

At last, the four siblings find themselves all in the thick of battle. In a novel that has been largely about the need to pledge oneself to just causes and do the right thing even when it's scary or dangerous, this climactic battle, gory as it is, shows Lewis's refusal to shy away from the uglier parts of the human condition and the struggles civilizations face.

CHAPTER 17: THE HUNTING OF THE WHITE STAG

The battle is over rather quickly—Aslan's army's first charge kills most of his enemies, and when those still living see that the Witch has died, they either give themselves up or flee the battle. Peter and Aslan shake hands, and Peter tells Aslan that their victory is owed to Edmund, who "had sense" to smash the Witch's wand rather than attack her outright. Peter, Aslan, and the rest go off to find Edmund, who is "terribly wounded." Lucy administers some of her magic cordial to Edmund, and then Aslan instructs her to take the cordial and go attend to the others who are wounded around the battlefield so that even more people do not die on Edmund's behalf.

In the aftermath of the novel's climactic battle between good and evil, Edmund is at last redeemed. Edmund, despite his treachery and confusion, managed to use his firsthand knowledge of the Witch's strengths to realize that her wand had to be destroyed first.

Lucy attends to the wounded while Aslan restores those who have been turned to stone. When Lucy at last returns to Edmund's side, she finds him much improved, and looking better than he has looked for ages; Lucy feels her brother is his "real old self again." Aslan knights Edmund, and as the others look on, Lucy asks Susan if Edmund knows what Aslan sacrificed for him; Susan says he does not. Lucy asks if they should tell him, but Susan discourages her from doing so.

Edmund's redemption is complete after Father Christmas's tonic works its magic on him. He is back not just to his old self, but to a version of himself who existed long ago before all of his confusion and resentment set in. As such, he is at last knighted by Aslan. He still does not know how much Aslan sacrificed for him, but his sisters fear the knowledge would be too much to bear.

That night, the siblings and the rest of their troops sleep on the battlefield—Aslan miraculously provides food for everyone. The next morning, everyone marches east to Cair Paravel, and the children are crowned Kings and Queens of Narnia, fulfilling the prophecy that foretold their rule. Aslan reminds the children that "once [one is] a king or queen in Narnia, [one is] always a king or queen," and urges them to bear their crowns well.

Aslan's miraculous conjuring of enough food to feed his entire army is reminiscent of Christ's famous procurement of fishes and loaves to feed his followers in the Bible. Aslan then passes the crown, so to speak, to the four siblings, showing how they have proven themselves worthy heirs to his legacy.

The children give "rewards and honors" to all their friends, including Mr. Tumnus, Mr. Beaver, and Mrs. Beaver. That night, there is a great feast, and while it is raging on, Aslan slips away. Mr. Beaver assures the worried children that Aslan often comes and goes—he "doesn't like being tied down," and of course has "other countries to attend to."

Aslan's departure confirms that he is leaving Narnia to Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy—he believes that they have the values and bravery needed to maintain the realm's prosperity and righteousness. Like Christ, he leaves his followers to carry out his word.

The siblings govern Narnia for many years, and their reign is long and happy. In the first few years of their governance, they spend much time hunting down those who were loyal to the White Witch and "destroying them," slowly ridding Narnia of evil. The siblings keep the peace, make alliances with countries beyond the sea, and grow into respected, dignified rulers. Peter is known as a great warrior; Susan is a peacemaker and ambassador; Edmund is known for his clearheaded judgement and sense of justice; Lucy is renowned for her valiance and fairness. Many years pass, and soon the siblings remember their lives before Narnia as nothing but a dream.

By flashing the narrative forward, Lewis shows in very little space how the four siblings, using the knowledge they gained in their early days in Narnia, lead the realm towards the prosperity Aslan hoped they would. They have all grown from the conflict with the Witch—they have become the best versions of themselves, and over the years, have worked together in harmony to ensure that Narnia prospers. By involving themselves in a conflict they were initially wary of, they were able to positively contribute to Narnia's fate and reap some rewards for themselves as well.

One year, Mr. Tumnus brings the siblings news that the mythical White Stag has been spotted in the woods—legend has it that the Stag grants two wishes to anyone who catches him. The Kings and Queens ride out on a Stag hunt, and follow the beast into a deep thicket that their horses cannot pass. Peter suggests they all alight from their horses and go forward on foot. Before long, they come to the lamp-post, but it has been so long that they have forgotten all about it; they see it as a "strange device" and wonder if it is a tree made of iron.

In this passage, Lewis demonstrates how Narnia has become the siblings' reality—the "real" world they left behind is nothing but a faded memory, and Narnia is all that matters. Even the sight of the lamp-post does not jog their memories of their lives back in England.

Lucy foretells that if they pass the post, they will find "strange adventures or else some great change." The others all agree with Lucy, but decide to pursue the White Stag past the lamp-post anyway; as Kings and Queens, they decide, they should not be afraid. They proceed onward "in the name of Aslan," and as they go, they soon find themselves making their way "not through branches but through coats."

In this passage, the siblings show that their collective fearlessness and intrepidness has lasted through the years—and all thanks to Aslan. They proceed bravely in the direction of something that frightens and unsettles them, just as they did so many years ago when they first came to Narnia.

The siblings all tumble from the wardrobe to find that it is not just the same day, but the very same hour when they had all gone into the wardrobe to hide; Mrs. Macready and the tourists are still talking in the hall. The siblings decide they must explain to the Professor why four coats are missing from his wardrobe, and so they approach him with their story.

The siblings are disoriented and confused as they tumble back into the "real" world—they have just experienced whole lives lived elsewhere, and now must readjust to the world they left behind while still retaining all the wisdom they've gained and the experiences they've shared.

The Professor believes their every word. He warns the children that they will probably never be able to return to Narnia through the wardrobe, though they will "of course" get back again someday. "Once a King in Narnia," he says, "always a King in Narnia." He suggests that the siblings don't talk too much about Narnia amongst themselves, and should never mention it to anyone else unless that person mentions Narnia first, or alludes to having had a similar journey. He advises them to keep their eyes open for others who seem as if they have been to Narnia, as well.

In the novel's final passage, Lewis suggests that the Professor has known about Narnia all along—and in a much more intimate way than was previously implied. He encourages the siblings to hold onto their memories and to protect them fiercely, but to always be aware that others may have had experiences similar to their own.

HOW TO CITE

To cite this LitChart:

MLA

Tanner, Alexandra. "*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe.*" *LitCharts*. LitCharts LLC, 15 Sep 2018. Web. 18 Oct 2019.

CHICAGO MANUAL

Tanner, Alexandra. "*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe.*" LitCharts LLC, September 15, 2018. Retrieved October 18, 2019. https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-lion-the-witch-and-the-wardrobe.

To cite any of the quotes from *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* covered in the Quotes section of this LitChart:

MLA

Lewis, C. S.. The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. HarperCollins. 1950.

CHICAGO MANUAL

Lewis, C. S.. The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. New York: HarperCollins. 1950.